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ELEMENTS

OF

THE SCIENCE OF RELIGION

PART II. ONTOLOGICAL

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OF

THE SCIENCE OF RELIGION

PART II. ONTOLOGICAL

BEING

THE GIFFORD LECTURES DELIVERED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH IN 1898

BY

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IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS

EDINBURGH AND LONDON

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PREFACE.

THE ten lectures contained in this second volume were delivered by me, in my capacity of Gifford Lecturer, in the University of Edinburgh, in November and December 1898. They form the second half of a course on the Science of Religion, and they treat of the *Ontological* part of that science.

They have been rendered into English, from the Dutch in which they were originally written, by the same friend who translated the first half of my course, as published in the first volume in 1897, to the Preface of which I beg to refer. My translator has also added a full Index to both volumes, which will greatly facilitate reference to their contents. Having been kindly revised by another friend, as well as by myself, this series is entirely uniform with the preceding. To both

of these disinterested friends my grateful acknowledgments are due.

In this volume, as in the first, I have printed in full several passages which want of time prevented me from delivering orally.

Although keenly alive to the difficulties of my task and the imperfection of its fulfilment, I have again been encouraged by the cordial reception and close attention accorded to me by large audiences to hope that my work has been appreciated. While my aims and method have been purely scientific, they will, as I venture to believe, tend to prove that between pure science and true religion nothing but perfect and abiding harmony can prevail.

C. P. TIELE.

EDINBURGH, *December* 1898.

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ERRATA.

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62, in 8th line from top, delete the word "von."
122, in 5th line from foot, delete the word "von."
127, in 10th line from top, delete the word "von."
276, in 5th line from foot, delete the word "von."

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29, in 9th line from foot, *for* "mean" *read* "means."
76, in 3rd line from top, *for* "conception" *read* "conceptions."
86, in middle, remove bracket after "half-human" and place it after "head" in the next line.
116, in 5th line from top, *for* "mortal" *read* "moral."
134, in 11th line from top, *for* "that" *read* "than."
258, in 3rd line from foot, delete the word "in."
266, col. 2, in last line, *for* "195" *read* "95."
268, col. 2, in 7th line from top, *for* "166" *read* "II. 166."
270, col. 2, in last line, before "66" insert "I."
273, col. 1, in 16th line from top, *for* "103" *read* "163."
276, col. 1, in 14th line from foot, *for* "Maraduk" *read* "Maruduk."
285, col. 2, in 18th line from foot, *for* "anthropical" *read* "theri-anthropical."

SCIENCE OF RELIGION.

LECTURE I.

THE MANIFESTATIONS AND CONSTITUENTS OF RELIGION.

In my previous course I endeavoured to explain my views regarding the development of religion. We investigated the stages and the directions of its development; we attempted to establish several laws or conditions which that development obeys; and lastly we tried to determine wherein that development essentially consists. We were concerned, in short, with an introduction to the morphological part of the science of religion. A different task now awaits us. We have hitherto been occupied with the ever-changing forms and varying manifestations of religion throughout human history, but we must now inquire as to what is permanent in the forms arising out of each other, and superseding each other, and as to the elements they all possess in common. This alone will

enable us, so far as our limited knowledge permits, to determine the essence of religion and ascend to its origin. The subject of this second course will therefore be an introduction to the ontological part of the science of religion.

I am fully aware that this part of my task is more difficult than the first. To classify and explain phenomena, and to trace the development which they indicate, is not so easy a task as simply to describe them or to study them within a particular period of development, as for example in the history of a single religion or a single important epoch. But it is a still more difficult task to penetrate to the source whence they all spring, and to discover the Unity in their multiplicity and diversity. I will not, however, dogmatically formulate my conclusions. I shall confine myself to the task of investigation, or merely to that of initiating an investigation, and shall attempt nothing more ambitious. Adhering to the same method as before, we shall start from the solid ground of anthropology and history, the well-ascertained results of which can alone enable us to understand the essence of religion and trace it to its source.

We therefore again take our stand upon established facts. And the first question we have to answer is—Can we discover, among religious phenomena, any that recur so invariably that we are justified in regarding them as necessary manifestations of religious conscious-

ness, whatever stage of development the religion may have attained? Or, in other words, Does religion contain any constant elements, none of which it can lack without injuring it and rendering it imperfect, and which therefore belong to every sound and normal religion?

It seems easy enough to answer this question. Most people who hear it will probably think that we need not be philosophers or scholars in order to answer it. Man is a thinking, feeling, and willing being, and this must show itself in his religion also. And in point of fact, this is proved by history and the study of religions. In every religion, from the lowest to the highest, we find certain conceptions regarding the supernatural powers upon which men feel their dependence, certain sentiments they cherish towards them, and certain observances they perform in their honour. This common and popular view, although inexact as we shall afterwards see, corresponds fairly well with reality. It has been countenanced by scientific authors, and adopted in various handbooks. Professor Rhys Davids,[1] for example, has recently defined the word religion as "a convenient expression for a very complex set of mental conditions, including, firstly, beliefs as to internal and external mysteries (souls and gods); secondly, the mental attitude induced by those beliefs; and thirdly, the actions and conduct depen-

[1] Buddhism, its History and Literature: New York and London, 1896, p. 4.

dent on both." He adds, however, that these conditions are by no means fixed and unchangeable, and that they "are never the same in any two individuals"—a fact which we are the last to deny, because they differ in accordance with every one's character and development —yet he calls them "the constituent elements of religion." Others again mention only two constituents of religion, conceptions and ritual, with the religious community founded upon these; but they regard both as manifestations of religious faith, and they deem the relation between the worshipper and his god as essential in every religion (Rauwenhoff);[1] or, like the philosopher Teichmüller, they resolve every imaginable form of religion into Dogmatic, Ethic, and Cult;[2] or lastly, according to the most recent theory, they explain this threefold basis by saying that religion consists in a direction of the will coincident with a conception of the deity, and that sentiment is the badge of its real existence.[3]

Seeing then that there is so much agreement in the main among inquirers of entirely different schools, in spite of differences in detail and exposition, it would seem impossible to doubt the accuracy of the popular view. Yet the matter is not so simple as it appears.

[1] Wijsbegeerte van den Godsdienst; Leiden, 1887.

[2] Religionsphilosophie; Breslau, 1886.

[3] O. Pfleiderer, Religionsgeschichte auf geschichtlicher Grundlage, 3te neu bearbeitete Ausgabe; Berlin, 1896.

I cannot here enter upon a criticism of each of the systems named. Nor will I mention those who regard one of these three elements as the sole essential of religion—such as agnostics and mystics, who sum up all religion in a vague feeling of, or mysterious union with, the divine (*unio mystica*); or such as the advocates of a school of theology which, though it has strong opponents, now finds many adherents in Germany, who regard religion merely as a practical system, and the church merely as an insurance society for the attainment of temporal and eternal happiness, a system of which the religious doctrine is but the theory, borrowed from philosophy in content and form, while religious sentiment is simply modelled upon the requirements of ethics with the needful modifications.[1] This, however, relates to systems which we can only discuss in another connection. But I must not omit to point out that the agreement of these views is not so great as their difference, and that the definition of religion given by Rhys Davids as a set of three mental conditions, among which, curiously enough, he includes actions and conduct, is a very different thing from Pfleiderer's view that the essence of religion consists in a direction of the will coinciding with certain conceptions of the deity, and that sentiment is merely a badge of its real existence. I must frankly confess, in

[1] W. Bender. Das Wesen der Religion und die Grundgesetze der Kirchenbildung, 4e Aufl., 1888.

passing, my inability to understand how anything can be a badge of the real existence of something different, without necessarily belonging to its essence. But above all it must be clearly kept in view that conceptions, sentiments, and actions are not, strictly speaking, kindred or really correlative terms. Words and deeds are kindred and correlative; and we do not require to prove that religion manifests itself in both of these, whether the words be merely the stammerings of primitive man, or poetic myths, or doctrines moulded in philosophic form, or whether, among deeds, we include religious observances, or, in a wider sense, the whole of man's religious life. And so, too, religious emotions, conceptions, and sentiments are kindred and correlative; they arise out of each other, as we shall see, and moreover they all form the source of words and deeds, to which they alone give a religious impress. Words and deeds, creed and cult, understood in their widest sense, can alone literally be manifestations. Although these are not infallible signs of the real existence of religion—because words may be repeated without conviction, and deeds may be aped without meaning—yet it must be admitted that every living religion produces them spontaneously, and that no religion is complete without both of them. But they cannot be called constituents of religion. The true constituents of religion are emotions, conceptions, and sentiments, of which words and deeds are at once the

offspring and the index. To describe these constituents as manifestations seems to me a misuse of the term.

We therefore distinguish the forms in which religion is manifested from the constituents of religion. These forms consist, as I have said, in words and deeds. I must now explain this a little further. The words in which religious sentiment finds utterance—those alone which flow spontaneously from the heart, which emanate from inward impulse, which conform to the apostolic saying, "We believe, and *therefore* we speak," but not those which are thoughtlessly mumbled by rote—the words which religious man utters because he feels the necessity of voicing what lives within him, are numerous and manifold. Such are prayers, from childlike stammerings to the solemn litanies of the most highly developed ritual — from the wordy and redundant prayers of those who seek to propitiate their god by a wealth of sounding phrases to "Our Father," sublime in its simplicity — from the storming of heaven with petitions and supplications, from which not a wish or want, however trivial, is omitted, to the piteous cry of the afflicted sufferer, the exulting song of the highly blessed, the declaration of entire self-dedication, of calm resignation, of perfect conformity of will. Such are hymns and songs of praise, some of them an embellished form of prayer, others a form of confession, and others again the utterances of the aspirations of

the soul—from the monotonous, wearisome, and usually plaintive litanies of primitive peoples to the Vedic songs, the Homeric hymns, the chants in honour of the chief Egyptian and Assyrian gods, the psalms of Babylon and Israel, the profoundly religious poems of Mohammedan mysticism, and those, no less deeply felt, and no less sublime, in which Christians of all times and churches, and in many tongues, have poured forth their religious feelings. Such are the epic narratives, partly borrowed from folk-lore, and partly original compositions, in which religious thought is embodied—myths from the world of gods, miraculous tales of the golden age when the sons of heaven still associated on almost equal terms with the dwellers upon earth, a mightier and happier race than the present — legends of heroes of light who smote the powers of darkness, stories of saints and martyrs, and lastly the history of the golden era of humanity when the champions of faith wrestled against unbelief and persecution, when religion, after its profound degradation, revived, and when the light of a higher revelation of the divine dispersed the dense and lowering clouds — not a history scientifically investigated or pragmatically recorded, but actuated and glorified by a spirit of pious adoration, and transformed into an epic, a beautiful idyl, composed by the deity himself. And such, too, are confessions of faith — but not of course those which are merely learned and repeated

by rote—confessions which bear witness to the overflowings of the heart; confessions in prophecies and sermons; confessions in the systems of great religious thinkers like a St Augustine, a St Thomas, a Wycliffe, a Melanchthon, or a Calvin, systems which borrow their form from philosophy, and seem cold and lifeless in their stern logic, but which are nevertheless the creations of a profound and fervent faith.

Nor is there less diversity in the actions in which religion is manifested. A word may be an action: a confession of the truth boldly uttered in the very face of the powers that are striving to crush it, a summons to resist religious persecution, a vow that binds a man throughout his whole life. But, as a rule, deeds form a more vigorous manifestation of faith than words. Those who confine themselves to mere words, spoken or written, however well meant, however deeply felt, cannot be regarded as thoroughly in earnest unless they seal them with their actions. And these actions are manifold. They do not consist solely in the observances summed up in the term Worship, of which we naturally think in the first place — that is, in communion with the Deity in secret or in public, at set times or whenever the heart yearns for it, a communion which, though indispensable to the maintenance of religious life, cannot of itself alone be called the religious life. There is something attractive to the religious soul in every religious act, provided it be

earnest and sincere. The form may be childlike, naïve, and defective, and we may have outgrown it; but man seeks in this fashion and in good faith to approach his God; and those who do not appreciate this fact place the form above the substance. Where all the arts combine to render the ritual impressive, as in the cathedral, which of itself elevates the thoughts, where, in presence of the devout congregation crowded into every nook, and amid majestic strains of music, the sacrifice of the Mass is offered up, even the Protestant who is enlightened enough to respect worship in every form feels impressed, if not carried away, by the grandeur of the spectacle. I wish I could adequately interpret for you a beautiful description of the Romish ritual given by Jan van Beers, a poet of the Southern Netherlands; but it cannot be fully appreciated except in the masterly verse of the original. He declares that, although he had ceased to be an orthodox Catholic, the foundations of his childhood's faith "having been sapped by the waters of doubt," "he felt his soul overwhelmed with a holy trembling," on entering the imposing temple to which his mother had once taken him as a child, and where "she had taught him to call the eternally Inscrutable, whose ineffable name the whole universe scarce dares to stammer, his Father." It seemed to him "as if the old familiar saints with their golden halos nodded to him from their niches, as if the angels once

more swayed beneath the arches to the music of harps and celestial songs, as if the whole bright-winged hosts of the dear old legends he had once so eagerly listened to by the fireside, long forgotten, suddenly burst into new life within his heart. And when the great organ lifted its melodious voice in the anthem, and "the radiant and glittering sun" of the sacrament was held on high by the priest, and the countless throng of worshippers, "from the choir-steps down to the dim twilight of the aisles, bowed as if beneath the wind of invisibly wafting wings," he felt himself a child again, and hoped and believed as a child, he thought of his mother, and involuntarily folding his hands murmured, "Our Father!" Even grander, and in its simplicity more sublime, was the worship of the persecuted Huguenots, who, when seeking an asylum in the wilds of the Cevennes, and ever threatened by the dragoons of Louis XIV., met in that temple not made with hands, in order that the inspiring words of their preachers and the artless recitation of their psalms might brace them for the unequal struggle. And yet, beautiful as is such adoration in spirit and in truth, finding utterance in manifold ways, its utterance in the form of ritual is but the symbol and foreshadowing of the sacrifice which consists in so entire dedication of self to the Most High that we shall live in Him and He in us, and that we shall be able to say with Calvin, "*Cor meum, velut mactatum, Domino in sacrificium*

offero." In short, those who desire to learn the nature of a religion from the conduct of its votaries must study not only their forms of worship, but all the other acts prompted by their faith.

But I must not omit to answer a question which arises here. How many words have been and are spoken, how many deeds done, in the name of religion, which are objectionable from a moral point of view, and even arouse our intense indignation? I do not speak of hypocrisy, which uses religion as a means of attaining sordid and selfish ends, nor of the thoughtlessness which prompts people to utter religious words or perform religious acts without considering the consequences, for there is no real religion in either case. But I allude to the harsh judgments and the condemnation pronounced by religious persons against those who differ from them, to the blood of martyrs of all ages and peoples, to the burning of heretics, to the so-called sacred synods and councils which have behaved like gangs of robbers, and to the so-called holy wars which have been waged with greater bitterness and obstinacy than any others. Are such horrors to be regarded as manifestations of religion? Unquestionably. But they also indicate a morbid condition of the religion concerned. They prove that it is cramped by the fetters of particularism and pedantry, that it is identified with an effete tradition, that it is contaminated by sordid passions, by arrogance, ambition,

and hatred. And to these evils is added the confusion of form with substance, which begets the notion that our own form of religion, that of our fathers, or that of our people or our church, is not only the best (as it doubtless is for us), and not only the purest of all existing religions (which is quite possible, yet without entitling it to take precedence of others which are less mature, but not necessarily inferior), but the only true religion, and one that ought to be adopted by the whole world. If this conviction gives birth to missionary enterprise as a labour of love and compassion, such enterprise, if rationally and prudently conducted, and not merely from proselytising motives, may be fraught with blessing. But when these motives are tainted with the passion of fanaticism, or clouded by the blindness of selfishness, crosses begin to be erected and stakes begin to blaze. But these are pathological phenomena, too often unjustly laid to the charge of religion itself, but which require to be studied and scientifically explained in order that we may learn to distinguish what is sound from what is morbid. And in undertaking this task the philosophic historian must refrain from all partisanship. He must not assume that all the wickedness of hell is on one side, and all the purity of heaven on the other. Even when the courage of martyrs who have died for their faith arouses his sympathy, or when he looks up reverently to the great Sufferer on the cross, he will not regard

their persecutors as utter fiends. For these persecutors were men, not fiends—men weak and ignorant indeed, and blinded by passion and selfishness, yet attached to their religion, although in one of its forms only; while their deeds of violence, although sadly misapplied, revealed that striving after unity which we have already recognised as one of the mightiest factors in religious development. The holiest never ceases to be holy although it is abused; and it is the duty of the scientific inquirer to discover it even when marred and obscured.

Religion therefore, which is a mental condition, manifests itself in all kinds of words and deeds. And let me say once for all that, when we speak of religion pure and simple, and search for its essence and origin, we do not mean that kind of religion which is adopted, without inward conviction, as a necessary appendage of enlightened education, and put on like a Sunday garment, but solely that religion which lives in the heart. And we have already pointed out its component parts —emotions, conceptions, and sentiments.

The sequence in which I have named these elements of religion is not an arbitrary one. The question as to their order of precedence has been much debated. Some trace the origin of religion to the feelings, others to the thoughts, or at least to the imagination, while thought and imagination are both traced to the intellect; others again trace it to the will. But many,

despairing of reconciling this conflict of opinion, have pronounced the whole inquiry to be futile, and have come to the conclusion that it is impossible to lay down any fixed rule. I do not, however, regard the matter as so unimportant or so hopeless. I am satisfied that a careful analysis of religious phenomena compels us to conclude that they are all traceable to the emotions—traceable to them, I say, but not originating in them. Their origin lies deeper, and we shall try to discover it at a later stage.

Religion always begins with an emotion. Strictly speaking, an emotion is simply the result of something that moves us, the effect of some external agency. But I use the word here in the more general sense in which it is commonly understood. And in this sense every emotion embraces three elements: (1) a predisposition, in the form of certain longings or aspirations, as yet partly unconscious, and certain latent and vague conceptions, differing according to the temperament and inclination of the individual, which may be described as a mood; (2) an impression produced upon us from without, or the affection itself; and (3) the fact of becoming conscious of such affection, or the perception of such affection.

In the case of the great majority of people, religious emotions are awakened by the representations of others, whether heard in the teaching of parents or masters, of preachers and prophets, or contemplated in the works of

artists, or learned from the scriptures which we have been taught from childhood to regard as specially sacred, or from other sources. But in the case of persons whose temperaments are religiously predisposed by nature, the emotion is aroused not only mediately, as above, but directly also by the events they witness in the world around them, and particularly in their own history, in their own life, and in the destinies of their own kith and kin, their family, tribe, or people. Their eyes do not require to be opened to the contemplation of the divine, or at least they cannot rest satisfied with the views of it handed down by tradition; but they discern the divine where it has as yet been undiscovered by others. Or, to express it otherwise, and perhaps more clearly, things that fail to produce any religious impression upon other people evoke it in them because they are more religiously disposed. For it depends solely on the mood or mental condition whether the things that a man hears, contemplates, or experiences—a word, a conception, an impressive natural phenomenon, or striking incident—awaken in him a religious or some other emotion. Many persons may sit at the feet of the inspired and eloquent preacher, and many may hang upon his lips, but few, very few, of them experience a religious awakening. Most of his cultured hearers will merely take an interest in his preaching as a work of art. The thoughtful will pay special attention to the force and accuracy of his argu-

ment. Moralists, who value religion solely as a means of making men honest, will only appreciate him if his preaching conduces to that end. Not to speak of the great masses, who, though not actually lulled to sleep, hear the sonorous phrases with a kind of dreamy complacency, without grasping their real meaning—how few there are whose inmost souls are stirred, and who are prompted to dedicate themselves and their lives to God anew! Nor is the case different when the emotion is awakened, not mediately, by the words and representations of others, but directly by things people see and feel for themselves. This requires no further explanation. We all know it by experience. Think for example of the starry vault of heaven. All who use their eyes must be struck with its beauty: those who have learned something of astronomy must marvel at its cosmic system and infinity; and this admiration will often give rise to religious emotion. But it is only the religiously disposed who will discern in it what the poetic eye of Rückert saw when in his famous sonnet he compares it to a letter written by God's hand, and sealed with the sun, but, when night has unsealed it, showing in myriads of lines a single mighty hieroglyph:—

> "'Our God is love, a love which cannot lie.'
> No more than this, yet this is so profound,
> No human mind can fathom or explain."

And, as was the case with the poet, the emotion

which has ripened into perception in the religious man is speedily and spontaneously transformed into a conception. Let it not be thought that those who are struck by the words they hear or read, or by the image they contemplate, merely adopt the conceptions of others, and that the conception precedes the emotion. This is apparently, but not really the case. No doubt it is a conception which produces an impression upon them, but it is only when the conception affects them religiously that they adopt it as their own. But every one does this in his own way; for the conception which people form for themselves is never exactly like the one which has given rise to it, and of which it is only a reflection. And it never can be thoroughly appropriated by them unless born of a genuine religious emotion.

And next, produced by such a conception and awakened by emotion, there arises a definite sentiment, the direction of the will which impels to action, which makes the mouth speak out of the abundance of the heart, which with gentle hand diffuses the precious fragrance of grateful love and veneration, and which, in short, will not allow the pious to rest until they have sealed it by word and deed.

If we now inquire what it is that stamps an emotion, a conception, or a sentiment as religious, and what differentiates it from an æsthetic, intellectual, or ethical impression, we may answer in the familiar old words,

"the tree is known by its fruits." Words sincerely uttered and deeds spontaneously performed afford the true test. Religious emotions may indeed be so weak and transient, and conceptions so vague, that they exert no great influence upon the will, and are therefore scarcely perceptible in the life of the persons concerned. But if the emotion is vivid, and the conception distinct, they cannot fail to subdue the will and to yield good fruit. And the fruit is different from that yielded by an emotion which is merely admiration for what is outwardly or morally beautiful, or for the sublime and attractive creations of poetic imagination, or for the inscrutable depth and infinity of the universe governed by its immutable laws—an admiration which incites the philosophic mind to reflection and impels it to search for the origin of things, in order to found a system of the world. But in the sphere of religion the emotion consists in the consciousness that we are in the power of a Being whom we revere as the highest, and to whom we feel attracted and related; it consists in the adoration which impels us to dedicate ourselves entirely to the adored object, yet also to possess it and to be in union with it.

This reminds me of a well-known and very suggestive myth which is admirably calculated to illustrate my argument. I mean the myth of Pygmalion, which was perhaps borrowed by the Greeks from the Phœnicians, but was certainly recast by them in a more beautiful

and poetic form. You all know the story. Pygmalion, the sculptor, has chiselled the image of a goddess so beautiful and so charming that, when it is finished, he falls in love with it. And, behold, the fervency of his love gives life to the cold marble, and the goddess becomes his! So too the aspiration after the divine awakes in the mind as an indefinite longing; and then, just as the sculptor embodies his idea in his work of art, so the religious mind forms a conception of the deity, corresponding with his ideal; but the conception does not burst into actual life, the believer is not wholly possessed and swayed by it, nor does he attain complete union with his God, until he worships Him in adoring love.

I have called these three constituents of religion indispensable. And so they undoubtedly are. Where one only of the three is present, or when one of the three is absent, there may be a certain religiosity, but there can be no sound and perfect religion. And this point requires to be emphasised, because the contrary has been maintained by various critics from different points of view. It was once the fashion, though we hear less of it nowadays, to look down with contempt on every manifestation of faith, and not even to take account of distinct conceptions and definite sentiments, but to attach importance solely to certain vague feelings and longings, as if they contained the whole pith and essence of religion. People felt specially edified by the

verses of a certain poet—who, as a poet, holds a foremost rank—who in the midst of his wildest flights has sung of the *immense espérance* which constrains us in spite of ourselves to raise our eyes to heaven; and even now certain young poets who scribble their pious confessions on the table of some *café*, under the inspiring influence of their *absinthe*, find enthusiastic admirers. I do not despise their outpourings, for I assume them to be genuine. I rejoice that the need of religion, so long obscured by prosaic materialism, is again beginning to make itself felt. This, however, is but the glimmering of dawn; the morning has yet to come; and noon is still far distant.

I am not sure whether any one maintains that the conception we form of the deity is really everything in religion, and that all else is indifferent. But people certainly often act as if they thought so. Our conception of God and of our relation to Him is very far from being unimportant, and we should do our utmost to purify and ennoble it. But, however poetically beautiful or philosophically profound it may be, it possesses little religious value unless it proceeds from emotion and gives an impulse to the will.

Lastly, it has been said, and it is still maintained by many, that everything depends on sentiment. Nor do we dispute that a great deal depends upon it. For is it not the blossom of which the fruit is the offspring? But was there ever blossom or fruit without tree or

plant? Surely the object towards which one's sentiment is directed, whatever be the conception that sways it, is far from being unimportant. Obedience, calm submission, perfect dedication, and sincere adoration are all genuine religious sentiments; and wherever they occur, there religion exists. But it is certainly not a matter of indifference whether the believer entertains such sentiments towards a benevolent Vishṇu or towards a cruel S'iva, or obeys Melek or Ashtarte, or adores the Yahve of Israel, who takes no pleasure in human sacrifices and is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. And there may even be sentiment of a very virtuous and exemplary kind, but unless it is deeply rooted in emotion it cannot be called religious.

There are, in short, three essential and inseparable requisites for the genuine and vigorous growth of religion: emotion, conception, and sentiment. All the morbid symptoms in religious life are probably due to the narrow-mindedness which attaches exclusive value to one of these, or neglects one of the three. If religion be sought in emotion alone, there is imminent danger of its degenerating into sentimental or mystical fanaticism. If the importance of conceptions be overrated, doctrine is very apt to be confounded with faith, creed with religion, and form with substance, an error which inevitably leads to the sad spectacle of religious hate, ostracism, and persecution. Those again who take account of sentiment alone regard every act done in

the name of religion, however cruel and inhuman, as justifiable on the ground that they are acts of faith (*autos da fé*)—of what kind of faith, they do not inquire —while others would care nothing if religion were entirely swallowed up by a dreary moralism.

But, important as it is, the indissoluble union of these three elements does not of itself ensure the completeness of religion. They must also be in equilibrium. In this respect religion differs from other manifestations of the human mind. In the domain of art the feelings and the imagination predominate, and in that of philosophy abstract thought is paramount. The main object of science is to know accurately, imagination playing but a subordinate part; while ethics are chiefly concerned with the emotions and the fruit they yield. In religion, on the other hand, all these factors operate alike, and if their equilibrium be disturbed, a morbid condition of religion is the result.

And why is this? The answer is to be found in the fact already pointed out, that religion constitutes the deepest foundation, or rather the very centre, of our spiritual life. Or, as it is sometimes expressed, "religion embraces the whole man." If this means that religion, once awakened and quickened within our souls, sways our whole lives, nothing can be more certain. For the object I adore, and to which I have dedicated myself, occupies my thoughts and governs my actions. But, if understood too literally, the ex-

pression would hardly be accurate, and might easily lead to fanaticism. Human life has other and perfectly justifiable aspects besides the religious. Yet one thing is certain, religion dwells in the inmost depths of our souls. Of all that we possess it is our veriest own. Our religion is ourselves, in so far as we raise ourselves above the finite and transient. Hence the enormous power it confers upon its interpreters and prophets, a power which has been a curse when abused by selfishness and ambition, but a blessing when guided by love —a power against which the assaults of the adversaries of religion, with the keenest shafts of their wit, with all their learning and eloquence, their cunning statecraft, and their cruel violence, are in the long-run unavailing and impotent.

LECTURE II.

GENESIS AND VALUE OF CONCEPTIONS OF FAITH.

Every living religion that bears fruit in human life —that is, every religion rooted in faith—begins with emotion, whether produced by teaching and preaching, or by our own contemplation of nature around us, or by our wrestling with it and with our lot in life. Whatever it be that awakens religious life within us, whether something that touches us directly, or the fruit of the experience of others, or even something that has been transmitted to them and assimilated by them in their own particular way, it can only possess religious efficacy when our hearts are genuinely moved by it. I endeavoured to prove this in my first lecture. And I have already warned you, and it may not be superfluous to reiterate my warning, against confounding the beginning of religion, which is merely the awakening of religious consciousness, with its origin. Its origin lies more deeply rooted in man's nature. Perceptions can but awaken

what already slumbers within us, and more highly gifted persons may voice what has hitherto lain inarticulate and even unknown to us in our hearts, but they cannot give us anything beyond what we already, though unconsciously, possess. They may reveal us to ourselves, but they can only do so provided we are religiously predisposed. In others they arouse alarm, dread, surprise, admiration, or even discontent, aversion, and embitterment. When we speak in religious language of the soul being stirred, or of its being touched by divine grace, we can only do so because, as the same language expresses it, man is created in God's image and has affinity with the divine. We must reserve for subsequent consideration the precise nature of the disposition of mind in which faith manifests itself, whether aroused by the impression of one's own experience or by the professions of faith made by others, and the essential characteristics of that faith. Suffice it for the present to determine how it is born into the world.

We must be careful to avoid the not uncommon error of confounding faith itself with the conception of faith, although indeed, as already pointed out, the emotion which calls it into life immediately transforms it into conceptions. We shall to-day consider the nature of these conceptions in general. And the first question that arises is, How are conceptions of faith formed?

The well-known answer often given to this question, and one that was defended at length by Professor Rauwenhoff a few years ago in his 'Philosophy of Religion,'[1] is, that conceptions of faith are the product of imagination. It is equally well known that this answer has been repudiated in various quarters, and often with indignation, as such a doctrine was supposed to undermine faith itself and banish it to the realms of fancy. Nor was it only the supranaturalists of the old school who took offence at this theory. For it was no less strongly objected to by persons who were of opinion that a rational religion could only be supported by rational reflection, and therefore that the doctrine of belief, to be of any value, must be formed and reformed, maintained and defended by reason. To say that conceptions of faith are a product of imagination seemed to the austere rationalist tantamount to saying that they are undemonstrated and undemonstrable nonsense.

For my part, it has rather seemed to me a matter of surprise that so obvious and simple a truth should require any defence. It is just as axiomatic as the fact that we see with our eyes and hear with our ears, with this qualification, however, which I must hasten to add, that we could neither see nor hear as we do unless we had brains, and that our imagina-

[1] Wijsbegeerte van den Godsdienst, p. 611 *seq.*

tion acts as that of reasonable beings. And this imagination is one of the noblest faculties of the human mind. Like a creative artist within us, it presents us with living pictures of what we ourselves have never beheld, and of things that have happened in the past or at some remote distance; it encircles the heads of those we love and revere with a radiant halo of glory; it builds for us an ideal world which consoles us for all the miseries and infirmities of actual life, and for the realisation of which we can never cease to strive. Nay, even upon our monotonous everyday life it sheds a poetic glow. But is it not a very dangerous faculty? Would it not be better for us, as practical men of sense, to get rid of the torments of this lively imagination, and thus escape many a bitter disappointment? Or would it not be wiser in us, simple mortals, to refrain from such lofty flights, which almost invariably result in a painful fall upon the hard ground of reality? No doubt, if left to itself, and unchecked by a clear intellect and a well-disposed heart, imagination may be a very dangerous faculty, and may lead to morbid fancies and even to fanaticism and madness. No doubt it is like a fiery steed, which, unless reined in with a firm and practised hand, may carry its rider he knows not whither. Yet without it there would be nothing left for us but to crawl on the earth and eat dust like the serpent in the garden of Eden.

Let us therefore distinctly understand what imagination can, and what it cannot do, and what part it takes in the formation of our religious conceptions. It creates images and ideals, but it borrows the materials for these from reality, from observation and recollection. It is the imagination that unites into a harmonious whole the images reflected in our minds by perception, and preserved by memory, but which, however rich and manifold, are but imperfect representations of what really exists in the world of phenomena. By it alone the historian is enabled, with the imperfect data at his command, to sketch a picture of the past in what he believes to have been its true colours, or of the progress of human development. By it alone the man of science is enabled to form an idea of the connection of phenomena and the laws which govern them; with its aid alone can the philosopher construct his system. With its aid also the religious man gives concrete shape to the faith that is in him by mean of the image of an ideal future and a supernatural and divine world. But imagination can do no more. It can only create images which give utterance to some thought, or give vent to some feeling. If it does not do this, the images are but the vain fancies of a wandering brain, and mere empty dreams. And accordingly when we call conceptions of faith the product of imagination, we must lay special stress on the word

conceptions, as being the forms in which faith reveals itself. And indeed the emotions and the intellect contribute just as much to the conceptions as the imagination which forms them. Imagination embodies religious thought and religious feeling, but thought and feeling are the essential and abiding elements. And therefore as soon as religious thought is deepened, and religious feeling purified—as soon, in short, as the religious man is developed—there arises the need of new conceptions to express more accurately what he thinks and feels in his higher stage of progress.

Conceptions of faith have therefore no permanent and absolute value, except, as I shall presently point out, to a limited extent only. And how should they? What do we see here of the Eternal except an uncertain reflected image? What image, however lofty, however sublime, can adequately represent the Infinite? Even St Augustine and Thomas Aquinas recognised the fact that we can only approach God in spirit, but that we cannot comprehend Him. And so, too, all sensible and devout people must be convinced that no conception of God, no conception of the infinite and supernatural, can be more than a feeble attempt to picture them to ourselves. And hence it is that images which long served to express the faith of many generations are superseded by others which satisfy new needs. We may admire

the poetry and appreciate the religious thought expressed in the Homeric Zeus, with his council of Olympians, or in the God of Israel, riding upon the Cherubîm, or speaking in a still small voice after the terrors of the storm, in the presence of His prophet, who reverentially hides his face; but these conceptions no longer respond to our religious consciousness. We hesitate to think of God, who is a spirit, as being visible to mortal eye. It is only in parables, or in the wearers of His image, inspired by His spirit, that we venture to figure Him to ourselves in human form. From our point of view, therefore, the picture of the father and his two sons, the penitent whom he embraces joyfully and entertains sumptuously, and the jealous elder son, whom he seeks to appease with gentle forbearance, will ever form the classic expression of God's all-embracing, all-forgiving, all-enduring love.

There is no doubt, however, that conceptions of faith possess relative, though not absolute value. The religious man of every age, and of every stage of development, longs for something more than vague feelings or abstract philosophical ideas. He desires to behold his God, if not with his bodily eyes, yet with his mental vision. And this is proved by the whole history of religion. The less developed religions invoke the aid of art to represent their gods, whom they desire to behold and to keep near them. Those, again, who

deem their God too holy to be represented in human form are fain to surround Him with the images of His elect messengers and saints, and, above all, of the only Mediator. Others who, from dread of abuse and idolatry, have refused to tolerate even this, do not disdain the use of symbols, and delight in pictures and other representations of sacred legends. And accordingly, if any one desires to awaken religious sentiment by his words, let him refrain from abstractions, conceptions, and logical demonstrations; but let him rather, as a poet, or prophet, or preacher, strive to make his hearers behold the Divine as he himself has beheld it.

In the formation of conceptions of faith, therefore, imagination is not the sole agent. All it does or can do is to give shape in our minds to the religious sensations we experience, and to the thoughts awakened in us by these sensations. For thought contributes no less than feeling and imagination to the genesis of conceptions. It even precedes their operation. With every sensation there at once arises, by virtue of our innate mental norm of causality, the question, Whence? And in religion, as well as in philosophy, this is really an inquiry as to the deepest foundations, the highest Cause; and the invariable answer of the religious soul is, A power not ourselves, but a power above us, on which we are dependent, and with which we are yet related. This answer is not the result of long and

deliberate contemplation, or of a calm and logical argument, but of a sudden and spontaneous process of reasoning of which we are ourselves unaware. It is only then that we form an idea of that power, an idea more or less in accord with the nature of our first sensation. Religious conceptions therefore originate in no different way from those of the artist or the poet, but they differ from them in one important respect. While the creations of art completely answer their object when they express æsthetic beauty, though purely ideal, religious conceptions, on the other hand, have no value as such unless supported by the conviction that they represent something real, however imperfectly, or unless, in a word, they are the expression of faith.

We now reach the vexed question, What is the relation between belief and knowledge? Or, to limit it to the special subject of our investigation, What is the difference between the conception of faith and the propositions of science? The chief answers usually given to this question are well known. "They are diametrically opposed," says one of them; "the latter are founded on exact observation, and are the result of clear and logical reasoning; the former, scientifically speaking, are mere guesses about things unperceivable and invisible, and are therefore just as uncertain as the others are well founded. Any one may convince a man in his sound and sober senses of a scientific truth

by means of a clear demonstration, but nobody can prove the truth of conceptions of faith to any man who does not already possess faith. Knowledge is communicable, faith is not." "Conceptions of faith," so runs another answer, "are the boundary-ideas of science; they form the necessary complements of human knowledge, which, because it is human, cannot extend beyond what is perceivable." And further it may be stated generally, without mentioning various other answers in detail, that there have been for ages past, and that there still are, Christian and non-Christian churches, sects, parties, and schools which recognise the dicta of science only in so far as they do not conflict with their own conceptions of faith, because they believe these conceptions to be founded on divine revelation, or at least to be irrefragable convictions. We shall neither defend nor impugn any of these opinions directly. Apologetics and dogmatics are foreign to our subject. We consider the rights of faith to be just as well established as those of science; and we are convinced that, when they come into collision, it is because one or other of them has overstepped the boundary between their respective provinces. We need not here vindicate the rights of science, while those of faith will be better vindicated by the final results of our investigation than by any long argument. But we must not pass over in silence the question as to the mutual relations between science and faith.

And, in the first place, we must distinguish between science and knowledge. No one qualified to judge will deny that such a distinction exists. Yet the two things are generally confounded. Knowledge is the sole and the indispensable material with which science works, but it is not itself science. Every man of science must be learned, and the more he knows, or rather the more thorough his knowledge is, the better; but every learned man is not a man of science. The latter must not only possess extensive and accurate knowledge, but he must be capable of thinking clearly. Some fifty years ago it was a favourite saying that "knowledge is power," which has doubtless given rise to the modern system of overburdening the brains of our school-children; but knowledge, like wealth, is a useless and even dangerous power in the hand of those who know not how to wield it aright. All essential knowledge is acquired by observation and research, and it is communicable to all who possess sound sense and the capacity to follow such research. In other words, it is demonstrable, and every unprejudiced person must admit the validity of the demonstration. But it is obvious that the knowledge thus acquired is of a totally different kind from what, in religious language, is usually termed the "knowledge of God," which is really identical with faith. In a certain sense it may be said that faith also rests on experience, and that it is awakened by what we see, hear, and perceive; but

the experience is an emotion of the soul, and the religious man transfers what he beholds and perceives to a sphere which eye hath not seen nor ear heard. All conceptions of faith are inferences. Acquired by reflection and shaped by imagination, they cannot be demonstrated like the results of research, or imparted in the same way as knowledge.

Between knowledge and faith there thus exists a difference in kind. If the term knowledge be applied solely to facts ascertained by the perception of the senses, and these alone be called truth, faith becomes a very uncertain term, and can lay no claim to the name of truth. But in that case science, too, would have to renounce all claim to certainty. And so, likewise, would many of the most cherished convictions which influence our actions and sway a great part of our lives—I allude in particular to confidence in the love of our relations, and in the honesty and sincerity of our friends and fellow-workers, and no less to our own self-reliance, both of which are ultimately and necessarily rooted in faith, but with which we are not now immediately concerned. For science—not in the limited English sense of the term, which usually denotes the natural sciences only, but in the wider sense now generally attached to it—science is not a collection or encyclopædic summary of all we know about a given subject, but is a philosophic conviction founded upon what we know. Science is not attained

by mere perception — which is indeed as much subjective as objective, and never presents reality with absolute precision—but solely by means of reasoning from acquired knowledge, and by means of hypotheses, destined to explain the mutual connection between ascertained facts, hypotheses which at first rise to the level of mere probability, but which by the discovery of new facts may be established as laws. This applies also to the so-called exact sciences, with the single exception of mathematics, which is concerned with ideal dimensions and proportions, and is therefore purely formal. But all the other sciences, and in particular the historical and anthropological, the so-called mental sciences, start from a hypothesis without which we are unable to advance a step: I mean that intuitive belief in causal relation which is implanted in us by nature, a belief which every one therefore takes for granted, though no one can prove it. In other words, they start from a belief. And thus, where we are concerned, not merely with ascertaining facts, but with criticising, explaining, and combining them, so as to build them up into a probable system, the subjective element asserts itself; mood, taste, opinion, and temperament play a foremost part; and a good deal must be left to intuition and æsthetic sentiment.

Between faith, which strives, on the basis of inward perception, to form an idea of what lies beyond perception, and science, which, kept within its proper bounds,

makes the perceptible the sole object of its research, the opposition is not so absolute as is commonly supposed. If anything like perfect certainty reigns in the province of science, how comes it that fierce conflicts so often arise between its different schools and parties? Nor is this merely the case when stupid and ignorant people are set to rights by lucid thinkers and sound scholars; for we often see the most distinguished men and the highest authorities attacking each other with a bitterness which pales the fire of the notorious *odium theologicum*. Science and faith are therefore by no means opposed to each other in the same way as certainty and uncertainty. Scientific theories and conceptions of faith are both attempts to explain what we perceive in nature and in mankind. The former do not go beyond the demonstration of the finite causes and the fixed laws which govern physical and mental life. The latter ascend to one or more supernatural causes, in which everything that is finite has its origin. And neither these theories nor these conceptions are immutable: for, with the advance of science, the development of thought, or the increase of moral insight, both are liable to be modified or even entirely superseded by others. Both are the fruit of imagination as well as of reflection, both start from what we behold and experience, but one aims solely at explaining the world of phenomena from within itself, while the other supplements that explanation by bearing witness to the

existence of a higher world, whence alone the visible world can be understood. To the man of science the results he attains appear more certain, because the phenomena by which he can test them are more easily controlled; and superficial people, who are blind to all that is not perceptible to the senses, agree with him. But the religious man, though well aware that the conceptions in which his faith are expressed form but a feeble reflex of the reality, is no less assured of the truth of that faith, and his assurance is justified by the instinctive dictates of his soul.

Can he then impart this assurance to others? This is what many doubt. I can expound a scientific theory so clearly, and prove so plainly that it accounts for certain facts better than any other, that every one who is capable of following my exposition without bias or prejudice must feel compelled to assent to it. This applies, however, solely to intellectual conviction. But in order to get others to assent to my conceptions of faith, the most cogent argument will be fruitless unless their hearts are touched. However poetically sublime a conception may be, however profound a doctrine, however masterly and logical a system, while we may admire it, we cannot adopt it as the expression of our faith so long as our faith is different. There is indeed an old saying which rightly declares that no one can give us faith. Such is the argument. And it has been so often repeated that it has become a commonplace.

I do not deny that there is some truth in it. But it does not follow that it is absolutely convincing, or that we may draw the conclusion from it that a scientific theory may be imparted by means of rational demonstration, while a conception of faith is incapable of being thus imparted. Let us examine the two propositions a little more closely. Are they so very different? We cannot make others participants of our beliefs if they are entirely destitute of faith, for we cannot give them faith. But neither can we make them participants of our scientific conviction if they lack clear intelligence and sound judgment, and these we cannot give them. In both cases there is a condition precedent to be fulfilled before our demonstration can take effect. In both cases we are powerless when we encounter stupidity or prejudice or unbelief. Surely, then, it is a mistake to maintain that science is communicable, and faith is not. The true solution of the difficulty is, in short, to be found in the fact, which no one will dispute, that science and faith have each a special sphere and a peculiar character, and that they must therefore be proclaimed by different methods.

How, then, can we impart our belief to others? Can we do so by the convincing force of our argument, or by the strict logic of our demonstration? Certainly not. We can only do so when our words find an echo in their souls. It is unreasonable to demand that we should only adopt religious opinions after having care-

fully scrutinised the grounds on which they rest, and after having convinced ourselves that they are not opposed to reason. How few there are who are in a position to do this! Surely, then, it is contrary to reason to insist that this is what should generally be done. Religious feelings are usually impressed upon us, at a time of life when we are as yet incapable of such scrutiny, by parents and teachers whose lessons interpret the prevailing opinions of society, of the church, and of the traditions of previous generations. If we fall under other influences at a subsequent period, if we feel that what we learned and repeated in our youth ceases to respond to the religious needs of a more advanced time of life, we can then form conceptions which satisfy these better, or we can attach ourselves to some school of thought to which we feel specially attracted. But even then we are generally constrained by an impulse of the soul, rather than by a scrupulous balancing of the for and against in a rational method. Argument, the search for reasons and proofs, is a thing that comes later, when we are called upon to account to others for our religious convictions, or are impelled by contradiction to justify our faith to ourselves.

In his chapter entitled "Authority and Reason," one of the most remarkable in his work on the 'Foundations of Belief,' already cited, Mr A. J. Balfour skilfully and to a great extent triumphantly refutes the view which

has often been accepted as axiomatic, that "Reason, and reason only, can be safely permitted to mould the convictions of mankind. By its inward counsels alone should beings who boast that they are rational submit to be controlled." And he combats the popular prejudice "that authority serves no other purpose in the economy of nature than to supply a refuge for all that is most bigoted and absurd." He adduces various examples to show that this is largely imagination, and that, in so general a sense at least, it is contradicted by the actual facts. At the close of his comprehensive argument he determines the relative positions of Reason and Authority in the formation of belief. He recognises the fact that to Reason is largely due the growth and sifting of our knowledge and the systematising of the conclusions of our learning; that to Reason we are in some measure beholden for aid in managing our personal affairs, in so far as they are not already controlled by habit; and lastly, that Reason also directs or misdirects the public policy of communities within the narrow limits permitted by custom and tradition. Whatever other influence it exerts is indirect and unconscious. But all these operations of Reason are trifling compared with the all-pervading influences of Authority, which at every moment of our lives moulds our feelings, aspirations, and beliefs, whether as individuals or as members of society. And this, according to the view of this acute thinker, is very fortunate.

For reason is a power which divides and disintegrates, and there is much more need of "forces which bind and stiffen, without which there would be no society to develop." And although he admits that Authority has often perpetuated error and retarded progress, Reason has not always been productive of unmixed good. We owe to Authority rather than to Reason our ethics, our politics, and above all our religion. Upon Authority depend the elements of our science and the foundations of our social life, and by Authority the superstructure of society is cemented. "And though it may seem to savour of paradox," he concludes, "it is yet no exaggeration to say, that if we would find the quality in which we most notably excel the brute creation, we should look for it, not so much in our faculty of convincing and being convinced by the exercise of reasoning, as in our capacity for influencing and being influenced by the action of Authority."

If we were disposed to banter, we might say that such a philosophy was of course to be expected of a statesman clothed with authority and a member of the Government, but that we should probably hear a totally different opinion if the speaker were sitting on the benches of the Opposition.

But it is with the philosopher alone, and not with the statesman, that we have to deal. And there is indeed so much truth in his reasoning that we are much more inclined to agree than to disagree with

him. For it would be of little use to maintain that authority has so much more influence over us, particularly in social life and in religion, only because humanity in general is so backward in rational insight, and that it is only the *élite* who are guided by Reason, while the mass of mankind is impervious to its persuasion. And it would be a mere trifling with words to say that Reason also is in its way a kind of authority from which, when it is once brought home to us, we cannot escape. But we cannot accept the proposition of the learned author without reserve, or at least further explanation. What is here meant by Reason, and what by Authority? Is reason merely the faculty of arguing, criticising, and sifting with full consciousness? If so, we certainly are not indebted to it for our religion or even for our conceptions of faith. But reason, which indeed also acts within us unconsciously, embraces far more than the purely intellectual faculty of criticising and combining, which to a less extent belongs to the lower animals also, and enables them to understand our commands. It is the faculty which differentiates the self-conscious human spirit from the intelligence of the lower animals, and enables him to form abstract ideas, to ascend from the particular to the general, and to investigate the cause and effect, the origin and destiny of things. And probably no one will dispute that it is precisely to this category that religious conceptions belong.

And what is Authority? The meaning of the term is certainly not invariable. There is a usurped authority which can only be maintained by force and fear. Some submit to it from ambitious motives, or because they think it to their advantage. But most people obey it unwillingly, and under compulsion alone, and throw it off as a burdensome yoke as soon as they see a chance of success. And it matters little whether the authority is wielded by the powers above us, by the State or the priesthood, or by some domestic tyrant, or perhaps by our equals or inferiors who try to force their ideas and prejudices upon us by the sheer force of numerical majority. To bow before such authority is degrading to every rational being. It begets hypocrites and infidels. And a faith which has no other foundation is undeserving of the name. And there is also a deceptive authority exercised by plausible sophists and demagogues, whether blind leaders of the blind, or persons who know better, but are actuated solely by mercenary motives or ambition. We must therefore make sure, when we are urged to reverence authority, that it is a legitimate authority. The only legitimate authority is that of our mental or moral superiors, gifted experts in science or art, profound thinkers, men or women of character and weight, sages and saints. Their authority is legitimate, for it is founded upon their actual superiority. It does not require to be

maintained by force or fear. Those who are modest and not entirely devoid of self-knowledge submit to it willingly, not with the passive obedience of slaves, or with blind reverence, or with thoughtless imitation, but because they feel that it opens their eyes to a clearer light and rouses their souls to higher enthusiasm; or, to use Mr Balfour's language, because they find themselves brought into a mental state which gives them greater peace, into a spiritual atmosphere where they breathe more freely. Be it noted, then, that personal influence and superiority, even in the province of science, to a greater extent than people think, but chiefly in that of religion, are the most powerful levers. We cannot impart our belief to others by cold reasoning; we can only win them over and carry them away by the fire and fervency of our conviction. And in adopting that belief they usually accept along with it the conceptions in which it is conveyed, as being its most appropriate embodiment. It is therefore undoubted that, like so many other elements in our intellectual, moral, and emotional life, our religion and faith also largely rest upon authority, or at least emanate from authority, the authority of tradition, instruction, and personal superiority. But it is no less true that such a faith is valueless, and that such a religion lacks vitality, unless they have found in our souls an echo of which our minds bear witness. For the only true and legiti-

mate authority is not that of arguments, which are often deceptive, nor that of man's individual reason, but solely that of truth, a heritage handed down to us by our ancestors, a light kindled by the most gifted of our contemporaries, awakening whatever truth has been slumbering within us — a process, whether we call it insight, or feeling, or conscience, which is ultimately nothing but the authority of Reason, or, to use a religious expression, the authority of the divine spirit within us.

In conclusion, those who entertain religious convictions hold them no less firmly than those who have scientific convictions. To impart them to others is not more difficult, and in some respects is even easier, than to induce them to accept scientific propositions. But there is a difference. We cannot possibly define faith by means of dry mathematical formulæ, or symmetrical syllogisms, or cold abstractions of metaphysics, without committing moral suicide. Faith can only embody in images, in symbols and allegories, in legends and parables, its bold aspirations, and its speculations soaring above the finite and transient. Not because it stands on a lower platform than science, but because it has a higher aim. It must make shift to express itself in a language which is too poor to express everything. It is, so to speak, a king in exile, a son of God in human form. Those therefore who, in order to prove that it does not con-

flict with common-sense, seek to bind it down to commonplace, everyday morality, and thus rob it of all beauty and fragrance, render just as poor a service to religion as those who maintain that the dogmatic, in which they sum it up for their own convenience or that of their generation, is itself the eternal and immutable truth. Schopenhauer, whom we may admire for many excellent and true sayings, without adopting his pessimism, pointed out long ago that it is a common mistake of Supranaturalists and Rationalists to seek for pure, literal, and unveiled truth in religion. "This, however, is to be sought for in philosophy alone; religion"—or as I should rather say, religious conception—"only possesses an indirect, emblematic, allegorical truth." "Rationalists are worthy people, but dull fellows;" "Those who try to find the plain and naked truth, either in the domain of history, or in that of dogma, are the euhemerists of our time." The supranaturalists do not perceive that their doctrine is but the husk of profound and weighty truth which cannot be rendered intelligible to the great majority of people in any other way. "But religion is well adapted to satisfy the indelible metaphysical requirements of mankind, and with most people forms a substitute for pure philosophic truth, which is difficult and perhaps impossible of attainment."

I can only accept this last utterance of the philos-

opher with some reserve. But this brings us to the important question of the relation between religion and philosophy, or rather between the doctrine of faith and philosophy, a question too extensive and weighty to be disposed of without due deliberation. We shall therefore proceed to consider it in our next lecture.

LECTURE III.

PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGIOUS DOCTRINE.

We now reach the important question, What is the relation of religion to philosophy? Or, to put it more precisely, what is the relation between the doctrine of faith, as the summary of all religious conceptions, or the theory of religious life, and that science of sciences which strives to weld the results of all investigation into a harmonious whole, with a view to penetrate to the root of all things, to the *principia rerum?* It has always been felt that, though often in conflict, the doctrine of faith and that science of sciences are closely related. For both seek unity in multiplicity and diversity. Both "are concerned specially and primarily with that monistic side of the cosmos which underlies all the divisions which separate finite individuals from each other."[1] Are they rivals which cannot exist side by side, and which therefore naturally

[1] C. B. Upton, Lectures on the Basis of Religious Belief; Hibbert Lectures, 1893, p. 17.

strive to supplant each other? Or are they truly one and the same thing, but merely in different shape, in a lower and higher, a less and a more highly developed form, one of which is destined ultimately to resolve itself into the other? Has the one arisen out of the other, or has each a distinct origin and a special aim? Such are the questions which we must now try to answer.

There are three possible solutions, each of which has its advocates. We may regard philosophy, or at least its theosophic part, as merely a more precise and scientific form of religious doctrine. Philosophy would then have sprung from religion, and would be destined to satisfy those who are more intellectually developed, and who desire definite declarations instead of the parables and allegories in which the conceptions of faith are usually clothed. It would then have gradually severed itself from faith, it would have lost its distinctively religious character, and would at last have entered upon an independent course of development.

Conversely, philosophy may have been the parent, and religious doctrine the offspring. In this case the latter would be regarded as a popular philosophy, rendered accessible to the many, by means of which religion would strive to build its practical system on a theoretical foundation. And in point of fact, there is an influential school of theologians which maintains

something of the kind. According to them religion is purely practical, and its essential is worship. The sole question that concerns the religious man is, What must I do to be saved? This is the instruction he desires to obtain. But all speculations as to the being and attributes of God, His relation to the external world, the origin and future of that world and humanity, and everything connected with these themes, belong to philosophy. The pious man, as such, does not puzzle his brains with such questions. And if theologians feel the necessity of rounding off their system of religion with them, they must borrow them from philosophy.

A third possible solution is, that religious doctrine and philosophy, though closely related, have originated independently, have developed separately, and have entirely different objects in view. And this solution also has its champions.

We cannot entirely concur in any of these proposed solutions. Each contains an element of truth, and the last is probably nearest the truth. Each suffices to account for certain phenomena, but not one of them can satisfactorily account for all the phenomena. We must, therefore, strike out a new path for ourselves. And with this object in view, we must explain at the outset that we are speaking of philosophy and religious doctrine in the widest sense. We do not mean philosophy solely as it shows itself in the mystic specula-

tions of the Indians, or in the more rational and logical, though still partly fantastic, systems of ancient Greece, where philosophy, as we now understand and employ the term, first saw the light. Nor do we speak of religious doctrine merely as that form which has been reduced to a more or less scientific system by the schools of Christian theology, a dogmatic system which, indeed, in so far as it is in touch with philosophy, is rooted in the philosophy of Greece. But we include all speculations as to the ultimate source of the universe, even in their most primitive forms, figured by means of images, myths, symbols, and the like creations of the imagination, forms of thought necessary to man in his infancy; and we attach even more importance to these than to the abstract conceptions demanded by a more mature stage of development. Every man in his sound senses, who does not lead the life of a half-dormant animal, philosophises in his way; and in all ages and among all peoples there have been men who felt the necessity of reflection more than their fellows, and who became the sages and the spiritual leaders of the generation. The Polynesian, surrounded by the ocean, asks himself how his island, *his* world, sprang out of the bosom of the deep; the Hottentot and the Kaffir marvel that the moon-god, their great-grandfather, although at times lost to sight, ever revives, while his children must die; the Red Indian seeks for the origin of the world and humanity in the fertilisa-

tion of the waters, which contain the germs of all life, by means of the mighty breath of the great creating Spirit,—and they are all philosophers and theologians in their way. There is not a single system of mythology, even among the most barbarous peoples, that does not possess its legend of the Creation, and thus endeavours to account for the origin of the universe. However childish the legend, however limited its universe, however destitute of poetry its form, it is by no means far removed from the beginnings of Greek philosophy in the time of Thales of Miletus; and though but a crude outline compared with the systems of Plato or Hegel, it does not differ from them in kind. And when we consult the most ancient literature we possess, we find that the Egyptians and Babylonians, the Chinese, the Indians, and the Persians, not to speak of the Greeks and the Romans, had their complete cosmogony and anthropogony, and some more or less vague conceptions as to the universe, the genesis, the connection, and the destiny of things, and the nature of man. These peoples had advanced beyond the infantile or rudimentary stage. Who does not know the often-quoted hymn in the tenth book of the Ṛgveda (129), which refers to the time when there was as yet neither existence nor non-existence, neither Death nor Immortality, neither air nor heavens, and when the One breathless breathed within itself, until the creative desire awoke in it and manifested the first germs of

spirit? Scarcely less familiar is the Babylonian cosmogony, which has indeed retained more of the mythical form, but which also reaches back to the time when "the Heaven was yet unnamed, and the Earth beneath had no name, but the waters of the two oceans, the heavenly and the earthly, were as yet mingled." Even the pious Iranian, though more inclined to study the practical side of life than to immerse himself in profound speculations, entreats Mazda Ahura to tell him,[1] "Who is the first author, the father of Right (*asha*)? Who created the path for the sun and the stars? Who makes the moon wax and wane? From thee, O Mazda, I long to learn this and much besides!"

"Who keeps the earth and the clouds above from falling? Who created the waters and the trees? Who has given swiftness to the wind and the thunder-cloud? Who, O Mazda, is the creator of the human race (*Vohu Manō*)?"[2] "What artificer has created light and darkness? What artificer has created sleep and awakening? Who has made morning, noon, and night? What leads the mind of him who cares for that which is right?"[3]

I quite admit that these are the merest beginnings of philosophy, half-mythical, half-dogmatical concep-

[1] Gâtha ushtavaiti, Yasn. 44, 3 *seq.*

[2] I think Vohu Manō, the good mind, here signifies the human race.

[3] The last line is obscure, and the translation can only be conjectured.

tions, which are not yet reduced to the unity of a symmetrical system of philosophy or of religious doctrine. This process comes later. The need of satisfying ourselves as to the foundations on which our convictions and our religious belief rest, and of harmonising our views of the world and of life, presupposes a maturity of reflection which requires a long previous course of training. Yet each has his own system, although it be unconscious. For in every stage of development people are dominated by a single root-idea, whence all special conceptions take their rise. It was such a system that we named polyzoism in its religious aspect, and hylozoism on its philosophical side—namely, the conception that all life is caused by a multiplicity of spirits dwelling in matter. Such a system, too, was Animism or Spiritism, the belief that spirits can move independently and choose their dwelling in objects of every kind, and display their power in all sorts of natural phenomena and human emotions. Systems they are, though unwritten, and neither taught by schools or universities, nor inculcated by churches, but which, no less than the philosophy of Aristotle or Kant, or the doctrines of Trent or Geneva, have dominated long periods of history, and which, to use the felicitous expression of Mr A. J. Balfour, form the spiritual atmosphere we breathe.

Philosophy and faith thus existed before they were

reduced to systems, or were arranged in scholastic or ecclesiastical dogmas. In recognising this, we by no means return to the theory commonly named after Creuzer, its ablest and most learned advocate, which attracted great attention at the beginning of the present century, the theory that mythology and symbolism—that is to say, the beliefs of ancient peoples —were nothing but philosophy in disguise, an exoteric doctrine destined for the multitude, and interpreted literally by them in their simplicity, but whose esoteric significance was perfectly understood by the philosophers and divines who had devised it. This theory has long since been condemned by all scholars ; and no one could venture to defend it nowadays without exposing himself to ridicule. Nor can the theory be maintained in the new form which certain philosophers have given it, to the effect that our dogmatic is merely a diluted philosophy, translated from stiff formulæ and abstract ideas into figures and symbols, solely for the convenience of the ignorant many, whose thinking capacity is as yet insufficiently trained to receive the truth except in parables—a sort of picture-book for children, who could understand nothing of the matter without it. For it is inaccurate to say that the Christian religion, for example, in its different variations, consists in figures and similes, except only in so far as human language is inadequate to express the supernatural and infinite otherwise than by analogy.

For this is not done merely to satisfy the needs of the less developed, but simply because it is unavoidable. There are things which we cannot speak of in any other way. And does not even philosophy, when it penetrates to the lowest depths, or soars to the loftiest heights, or when it grapples with the most difficult problems, adopt the very same method? The only persons who neither adopt nor require to adopt this method are those who give up the attempt to seek for unity in the interpretation of the world's problem, and who deny everything supernatural. And as regards Antiquity — the period of the origin, co-ordination, and organisation of myths, or in a word, the mythological period in its two stages—mythology was not then a mere vehicle for conveying truths which could not be otherwise grasped, but was itself the very philosophy and religious doctrine of that period. Myths and symbols were at first the necessary forms of both, for they were the only forms of thought corresponding with the imaginative capacity in that early stage of development. To later and less unsophisticated times belong the temple-schools and sacerdotal colleges; the gods are classified in theogonies, and in the hierarchy of an organised heavenly kingdom; the genesis of all things is explained in cosmogonies; sometimes, at least among the Aryan peoples, the whole drama of the world is traced in its successive periods, and crowned with speculations

concerning its most distant future. But here again we deny that these are images which conceal their thoughts: in so far as they are images, they are the only possible expressions of the daring thoughts of their period.

Thus far philosophy and religious doctrine are still closely connected, so closely indeed that it is impossible to distinguish the one from the other. As yet all philosophical speculation is at the same time a conception of faith. The stage of thinking, with a view to comprehend and to explain, the stage of science or philosophy as ends in themselves, has not yet arrived. There is as yet no theory apart from practice. At length, slowly but surely, comes the differentiation. Laymen attempt the solution of questions hitherto regarded as the sole property of priests and theologians. Even the Vedic Brâhmanas afford evidence of this in more than one passage.[1] Kings, who thus belonged to the rank of the Rājanyas, ventured to ask questions of learned and even famous Brahmans, such as Yājnavalkya; and when these sages were embarrassed and unable to reply, the questioners themselves supplied the answers. Questions and answers alike seem to us absurd. They are characteristic of that playful fencing of wits in which Orientals delight. Yet they are the first glimmerings of a

[1] See the passages quoted by Dr John Muir in his 'Original Sanskrit Texts,' vol. i. p. 427 *seq.*

philosophy more or less independent of religion, or at least independent of those who had hitherto usurped exclusive sway in all spiritual matters—a philosophy according indeed but little with our methods of thinking, yet one which by its originality, depth, and boldness constitutes an important chapter in the history of the human mind. The independent philosophy of the West took its rise in Greece, that cradle of our modern civilisation, and developed its greatest power among the Germanic peoples, and not least in that country where, as I am assured, every thinking being, from the Duke of Argyll and Mr A. J. Balfour to the youngest student in the University of Edinburgh, is at once a philosopher and a theologian. But it is perhaps in the history of Greek and of German philosophy that the relation between philosophy, now of full stature, and the prevailing religion can best be studied. It is natural that religion, especially at first, should bitterly oppose philosophy, and that philosophy, now conscious of its power, should repudiate the dictation of the Church, and decline to formulate its results in conformity with the precepts of theology. Each anxiously and jealously guards its own domain. Henceforth they develop side by side. Yet, having been once so closely connected, being still related, and concerning themselves with the same subject-matter, though with different aims, they are bound to come into ever closer contact. It is philosophy in particular

that exerts a constant influence over religious doctrine. You will remember that the Christian dogmatic not only derived the form of its dogmas, but even borrowed many ideas from Greek philosophy, in so far as they could be made to harmonise with the teaching of the Gospel. Think only of the supremacy wielded by Aristotle, or at least by the philosophy regarded as his, over the scholasticism of the Middle Ages, and even over the dogmatic of the Reformers and their successors. In Calvin were united the philosopher and the theologian, as was afterwards the case with Schleiermacher. The Remonstrant theology of the eighteenth century was much indebted to Locke; and I need hardly remind you of the immense influence exerted by such philosophers as Kant and Hegel upon the theology of the nineteenth century in Germany and beyond it.

After what has been said, it will be comparatively easy to determine wherein philosophy and religious doctrine agree and wherein they differ. The task of philosophy is, with the aid of our whole experience, to explain our faculty of perception and our whole knowledge, and thence to construct a complete and connected cosmogony. With this end in view, it utilises the results of the various sciences, sifts, criticises, and co-ordinates them, and is thus the science of sciences. Its investigation also embraces religious belief, which is a conviction of the con-

science, and which it tests in order to see "how far it accords with the laws of logical thought and with the ascertained results of our scientific knowledge of the world."[1] Whatever be its influence on human life and conduct, whatever practical lessons may be deduced from the laws it has discovered, yet, ever since it has attained independence, it has been purely theory, purely science. Religious doctrine, on the other hand, is not science, but is a theory of practice. It also rests on a metaphysical foundation, and unless convinced of the reality of a supersensual world it builds upon sand; but since it has attained its independence it has been primarily a doctrine of life. At first it runs a course parallel with that of philosophy, and requires to be careful to keep step with it from the very outset. But even when they progress side by side, religious doctrine to some extent pursues its own way. In other words, while it assimilates metaphysical truth from philosophy, because it feels the need of a solid foundation for its edifice, it seeks to substantiate that truth mainly by the evidence of conscience, and then proceeds to ask what bearing the truth has upon human life. It defines the relations between God and man, their foundation and essence, the causes which sever them, and the means by which they may be renewed; and

[1] Pfleiderer, Religionsphilosophie auf geschichtlicher Grundlage, 3rd ed., p. 459.

these it sums up, either in the form of a law, or a theological system, or in a series of principles to be promulgated by preaching. It is above all a doctrine of salvation, an "Anweisung zum seligen Leben," a "guide to a blessed life," as it has been called by a great philosopher. It thus has its own subject-matter, aim, and method, and is therefore a very different thing from a mere translation of the abstract ideas of philosophy into popular images; just as even philosophy itself cannot advance very far with its abstract ideas, for as soon as it enters the domain of metaphysics it is also obliged to have recourse to analogies and images. In short, philosophy has fulfilled its task as soon as it has given a reasonable explanation of the phenomena of nature, and has set up a cosmogony which satisfies the demands of rational thought; but religion goes farther, and teaches that the only way in which we can become reconciled with the world and with life is to establish our proper relation towards God — not a way to selfish happiness, but a way to harmony in our being, thought, and feeling, and to true peace of mind. Well might religion adopt as her motto the sacred words, "I will give you rest for your souls!"

If this, then, be the relation between philosophy and religious doctrine—first a long period of union, during which they are hardly distinguishable from each other, and then a severance, during which,

although presenting many points of contact, they are in a great measure independent, and pursue totally different aims—why is it that so deadly a conflict often arises between them? For they are constantly at war, or at least on that footing of armed peace which, as is the case with the great powers of Europe during this closing part of the nineteenth century, threatens an outbreak at any moment. Almost every page of history mentions such conflicts. It cannot be said that believers are merely defending themselves, or rather defending what is dearer to them than all else, against philosophers who attack religion itself, and not only subject what it proclaims as divine truth to severe criticism, but even deny it and represent it as mere imagination — it cannot be said, in short, that it is merely a struggle of religion for existence. This may perhaps hold true with respect to some of the schools and teachers of antiquity, such as the later Eleatics, the Atomists, the Epicureans, or the French Encyclopædists of the eighteenth century, or men like Feuerbach, Nietzsche, and many others; but it does not hold true of a Pythagoras, an Anaxagoras, a Socrates, or of such profound religious pantheists as Spinoza and Fichte, and such philosophical theologians as Schleiermacher and Biedermann, nearly all of whom, in the name of religion, have been martyred, persecuted, exiled, or condemned as heretics. Self-defence is not the only cause of the

strife. Nor is it the only cause on the part of philosophy, which often attacks religion, although its right of investigation and criticism is fully recognised. When a shallow rationalistic or cynical-materialistic philosophy proposes to weigh everything in its puny scale, and denies the rights of the soul, then indeed religion is in danger, and those who love it must take up arms in its defence. In that case philosophy is to blame. When it proposes to explain everything, even the origin and essence of things, upon base and material principles, religion is then fully justified in opposing such a distorted view.

But they are not always so strongly opposed to each other. Their dissensions often arise from misunderstanding, from the confounding of a specific and temporary form of religion with religion itself. Philosophers oppose religion because they are unable to distinguish it from the conceptions in which it presents itself to them, or to comprehend that these conceptions are merely an ephemeral garb; and they do not take the trouble to penetrate to the ineradicable needs of the human soul which are revealed in these conceptions. Theologians, labouring under a similar misconception, regard philosophy as an enemy of religion because it subjects to criticism the poetic and philosophic forms, the myths and dogmas in which religion expresses itself, and do not perceive that it thus in reality conduces to the purification and the development of

religion. But the principal cause of these dissensions is a different one. It consists in the difference of development which often subsists between the two. Philosophy continues its researches without intermission. Religious doctrine, on the other hand—and here I allude not to philosophic theologians and religious thinkers, but solely to organised communities — remains stationary for long periods. For a long time elapses before the need of revision is felt. Whatever it has appropriated from philosophy and science, its knowledge of nature and mankind, the physiology and psychology by which its conceptions are connected, all belong to a period long since elapsed. In this respect, therefore, it lags behind philosophy. In so far as its garb is concerned, it stands upon an obsolete platform. And, instead of trying to vindicate its position with great persistence, but always unsuccessfully, and thus injuring rather than promoting religion, it would do well to bring its conceptions and arguments into harmony with the more accurate knowledge and clearer insight attained in modern times. Nor in doing so would it require to abandon a single jot of the essence of belief. Philosophy and religious doctrine must, therefore, ever continue in mutual intercourse. Philosophy must not be content to criticise religion and faith, or perhaps to condemn them on account of an obsolete doctrine which may happen once to have been officially

recognised in one communion or another, and accepted by the multitude without much reflection, but which has long since been modified by earnest seekers of religious truth and brought into harmony with the demands of religious souls and of general spiritual development. Religious doctrine, on the other hand, must not come into conflict with what has been ascertained and established in other domains, whether moral, scientific, or philosophical. For this is a corollary of the law of the Unity of mind, the necessity of which we have already pointed out.

It might almost seem as if, in dwelling so fully upon the subject of creeds or doctrines of faith, we meant to identify them with religion. The reverse is the case. They are not even the foundation of religion. Religion existed long before there could be any question of framing its doctrine. The matter stands thus. Religion begins with conceptions awakened by emotions and experiences, and these conceptions produce definite sentiments, which were already present in germ in the first religious emotions, but which can only be aroused to consciousness by these conceptions; and these sentiments manifest themselves in actions. But all this is spontaneous, and originally at least it was not the result of conscious reflection. Reflection comes on the scene at a later period, on a higher stage of development, and consciously frames its creed or doctrine of faith. This doctrine has two forms, a practical and a

scientific, which, though differing in form and aim, are identical in content. Both are indispensable for instruction, the one for the benefit of the community, the other for the training of those who are destined to be its pioneers. Both of them embrace, sum up, and arrange the results of religious experience and speculation prevailing in different stages of development in a definite sphere, and in one or other form of religion. The doctrine of faith, as we have said, is the theory of a practice, not an abstract philosophical system, but a doctrine of life. Its essential value consists also in this, that it affords thoughtful believers an opportunity of testing the foundations of their faith, and that it is likewise adapted to justify faith as a connected system in response to the doubts of others. And it possesses the further merit of summarising and conserving all that earlier generations have attained in the domain of religion, and thus of forming a starting-point for a renewed investigation of truth.

I am well aware that it has sometimes been scandalously misused. I do not forget that it has been degraded to the function of fettering men's consciences, of stifling inquiry, and of hampering the loftier flights of the human mind. I admit that, in its name, men have sown hatred and discord, have persecuted, martyred, and murdered. Nay, even in the name of science and philosophy, similar cruelties have been perpetrated.

But I maintain that for every religion that claims to be something more than a transient outburst of fanaticism, or a dead ritualism or formalism, for every religion that desires to stand on the solid foundation of Truth, the examination of its creed is an imperative necessity. Without such examination every ethical religion must run wild. It has been seriously maintained of late that ministers of the Gospel would do better in future to devote themselves to the study of political economy, or of social questions, rather than to that of theology and the science of religion. Were such a view to find acceptance, it would be fatal, not only to the Church, but to the whole development and prosperity of religion. It is a consolation, however, to know that it is not the first time that this folly has been proclaimed, and that it will probably die out as quickly as it did on former occasions. Even Melanchthon had to contend against it. And it aroused the usually so gentle and humane Præceptor Germaniæ to such indignation that he declared that "those who from the pulpit tried to dissuade men from religious studies ought to have their tongues cut out."[1] I cannot recommend so radical a measure; but I earnestly hope that neither the Church will be swept away, nor that men who have been trained for their important office by a careful study of theology and a scientific investigation

[1] See A. Hausrath, "Philipp Melanchthon," in the 'Protestantische Monatshefte,' I., ii. p. 45.

of religion will ever be superseded by socialistic quacks or dabblers in political science.

But I must ask pardon for this digression. I now return to our proper theme. If the doctrines of belief are highly conducive to the maintenance, propagation, and development of religion, they are no less valuable to the student of the science of religion. The comparative study of creeds forms one of the chief sources of our knowledge of religions, and best enables us to investigate their essence and origin. It has precisely the same relation to our science as comparative philology has to the science of language. It is no more the business of the science of religion to propound a new creed, in addition to those already existing, than it is the task of the science of language to attempt to set up a new art of speech. As comparative philology is the source of our knowledge of the laws, essence, genesis, and growth of language, so the comparative study of creeds is the source of our knowledge of religion and belief. Professor Pfleiderer of Berlin, my esteemed predecessor in this lectureship, has recently given new evidence of his unwearied energy in the publication of a new and entirely remodelled edition of his 'Philosophy of Religion.'[1] And this edition also affords evidence of his true scientific spirit, as he does not hesitate to renounce his earlier views when continued investigation

[1] Religionsphilosophie auf Geschichtlicher Grundlage; dritte neu bearbeitete Auflage; Berlin, 1896.

has led him to form new opinions. No one can study that work without deriving much instruction from it, even when he sometimes feels constrained to differ from the author. My own conception of the task and method of the science of religion coincides in many respects with his. In particular I concur with him in his appreciation of historical research as its foundation, although I regard historical research as a mere preparation for philosophical study, while he goes a step farther in regarding it as an integral part of such study. In one main point, however, I differ from him entirely. In his view the aim of the science of religion [1] is to effect a reconciliation ("eine Verständigung zu vermitteln") between religion, as historically handed down, and the scientific knowledge of the present day. For this purpose it would require to test every detail of religious tradition, in order to ascertain how far it accords with the laws of logical thought, and with our scientific knowledge of the world—with the established facts of natural and historical science. But such is not, in my opinion, the task of the science of religion, but rather that of philosophic theology, which is, in fact, a new form of dogmatic; or it is the task of some special dogmatic, treated as a science. Still less do I agree with him in his doctrine that the science of religion must rest partly on metaphysical foundations, —that it must inquire into the origin of the relation,

[1] P. 459 of the edition cited.

as understood by the devout, between God and man, and determine how we are metaphysically to regard God's relation to us, and also to the world in general, since we form part of that world. Such a problem, in my opinion, belongs to the department of general philosophy. If the science of religion attempted its solution it would go beyond its province. For such a task the votaries of our science would require to undertake a preliminary investigation, and to possess a wealth of knowledge in different provinces, which could not reasonably be demanded of them. Our study, in short, forms a department of anthropological, not of metaphysical science. On the other hand, I am entirely at one with him when he imposes on our science the duty of examining the practical motives to which our conceptions of faith respond. For these conceptions are the symbolical means of giving expression to practical motives and arousing them to action. And in endeavouring to understand the positive psychological content of historical facts, our science of religion has become at once more thorough and more tolerant than it used to be. On that point, therefore, he is unquestionably sound. The comparative study of creeds, again, is a psychological investigation. Its aim is to discover how the various myths and dogmas, apparently conflicting, and differing a thousandfold in form, really express those self-same general needs of the human soul, which are ineradicable, and which therefore constantly recur

in new forms. It has to determine what, in each stage and in each direction of development, are the constant elements of religious belief; it has to discover, by means of patient research and scientific analysis, what the Roman Catholic Church attempts to establish by infallible authority: *quid semper, quid ubique, quid ab omnibus creditur.* Religion, the subject-matter of its inquiry, is a metaphysical fact, but its method of inquiry is not metaphysical.

Now every creed, be it expressed in philosophical dogmas, or in poetic myths, or in childish animistic conceptions, is the summary of all those elements which together constitute every religion, and whence every religious idea emanates. Its main constituents are a doctrine regarding God (or theology), a doctrine regarding man's relation to God, ideal and real (or anthropology), and a doctrine regarding the means of establishing and maintaining communion with God (soteriology or the doctrine of salvation). By these means we are presented with a complete picture of religion, and we are therefore best enabled to study it by a comparison of creeds.

The starting-point is theology; for belief in one or more supernatural powers, in a God or a divine world, is the foundation on which all religion rests. There can be no religion without a God. In their zeal for religion without metaphysics, people have sometimes spoken of an atheistic tinge in modern theology, which

is nevertheless supposed to be consistent with religion. But it is surely obvious that the combination "atheistic theology" sounds somewhat strange, and would indeed be ludicrous if the matter were not too serious. We have already spoken of the atheism of Buddhism; but when it made its appearance as a religion it had Buddha for its God. What, however, distinguishes religious theology from the philosophic is that the former is not purely speculative like the latter, but is directed to practice. The principal point here is not the question as to the nature of God, but as to His relation to us and to the world of which we form part, and as to the agencies and ordinances in which He reveals Himself to us.

The converse of this theology consists in religious anthropology. We are here concerned with religious ideals and aspirations, with man's origin and destiny, with his life in communion with his God and in obedience to His laws and commandments. But, in contrast to this ideal, we find man in his unworthiness and weakness, his communion with God obstructed by sensuality and selfishness and broken by sin, while he himself looks longingly for salvation and redemption, for reconciliation with his God, for help in the conflict.

To this longing responds, in the third place, the doctrine of salvation, which indicates the means of restoring that communion, of breaking the power of evil, of beginning and continuing a new life, and of realising hope.

In order to understand the essence of religion we must study these three root-ideas of all religion in succession. They may fairly, though not quite fully, be summed up in the favourite watchword of religion, "faith, charity, and hope," and they also coincide, though not quite exactly, with the three constituents of religion, conceptions, sentiments, and actions.

Do not, however, suppose that, in making this statement, we only have in view religion in its highest development, or that all this may apply to the Christian and several other ethical religions, but not to the nature-religions, or at least not to the lowest of these. It holds good of all. In a thousand varieties, in conceptions, differing according to the degree of development and the character of many races and peoples, we invariably find these three elements: belief in a divine power upon which we are dependent, belief in the high origin and destiny of man, coupled with a consciousness of his shortcomings, and belief in the possibility of salvation, combined with attempts to secure that blessed consummation. All religions are religions of redemption, and all religious doctrine is a doctrine of salvation. This is one of the most striking, and at the same time most certain, results of our science. And to demonstrate this truth, even when it manifests itself in but feeble germs or in unfamiliar forms, is one of our chief tasks.

LECTURE IV.

THE CONSTANT ELEMENT IN ALL CONCEPTIONS OF GOD.

NOWHERE perhaps do there exist such diversity and such conflict of views as in the province of the conception of faith. To any one making acquaintance with this province for the first time it seems a perfect chaos; and even those who have explored it carefully find it very difficult to survey it and map it out on any systematic plan. In a sphere in which imagination has free scope and often seems to run riot, is it not in vain to seek for any constant element, to try to discover anything like unity amid endless multiplicity, or anything abiding amid ceaseless change? The task is certainly a difficult one, but it is not hopeless. For the abiding element we seek is not to be found in the conceptions themselves, but rather in what they express. We might perhaps arrange the multiform conceptions in certain groups, and then reduce these to a number of definite types, but we should be unable to demonstrate the ne-

cessity of these types. They may often recur in somewhat modified form, but there is nothing to prove that they must always recur; and it may even be doubted whether we should then have laid a foundation for any such assumption. We should find that certain definite conceptions are common to peoples and communities which are either related to each other, or which have reached the same stage of development, but that, as soon as the whole of mankind has outgrown these conceptions, they recur no more, and henceforth retain an historical value only. And how can it be otherwise? Could we, for instance, still conceive the Deity as enthroned on the clouds of heaven or in the realms of light above the firmament, while the powers of darkness and evil hold sway in the depths beneath? We should in that case still have to regard the earth as the centre of the universe, fixed above a dark abyss, and vaulted over by the heavens, and we should have to repudiate all the ascertained results of scientific research and reflection. Let us take another example. For many long ages polytheism was the normal form of religious belief, except where the latter still occupied the lower stage of polydæmonism; and it is not until late in the history of mankind, and only among one or two peoples at first, that it was superseded by monotheism. Slow of growth, the latter only triumphed after a long struggle. For pure polytheism there is now no future left. It still survives, but within ever narrower limits. It has in-

deed revived in some monotheistic religions, when these have been imposed by force upon a people or a community which was not yet ripe for them, but only on condition that its numerous gods group themselves round the throne of the One as his servants and vassals. We may safely say that the foundation of a pure polytheistic religion, except perhaps among a people absolutely shut off from civilisation, has once for all become an impossibility. Poets like Schiller and Heine may dwell regretfully on the beauties of the Greek or the German theogony, which seemed beautiful to them because they saw their poetical side only; but these systems will never return. Zeus and his Olympians, and Wodan with his Asas, belong irrevocably to the past, in this sense that they can never again become objects of belief. A religious conception may be absolutely general during a long period, or even throughout a series of successive periods of history, so general that we may almost regard it as an essential element inherent in all religion; yet there comes a time when it turns out to be no less transitory than the conceptions it has superseded.

We must therefore, as I have already said, search for unity, for the abiding, for the essential, not in any conception, however general or enduring it may seem to be, but solely in the religious thoughts and aspirations to which the conceptions give expression. When we find such thoughts constantly reviving under new

forms, we may reasonably assume that they are essentials of religion.

I do not of course propose to subject the whole of religious doctrine in all its details to such an investigation. We must confine ourselves to a few leading ideas, and try to show that they constitute an integral part of religious belief, although manifesting themselves in very various and sometimes apparently conflicting forms.

The first question which requires to be answered is —What is this permanent and essential element in the manifold conceptions regarding the Deity which succeed each other in the history of mankind, and which still cause so many divisions at the present day? For all religious doctrine emanates from some theology, however primitive. What then, it may be asked, has the only, eternal, all-wise and powerful, omnipresent and omniscient, holy, just, merciful, and gracious God, whom Christians, Jews, and Mohammedans alike worship, albeit in different ways — the God whom the Gospel proclaims as the Perfect one, the loving, all-attracting, all-reconciling heavenly Father—what has He in common with even the highest of the nature-gods, the Zeus-Jupiter of Hellas and Rome, not to speak of the bloodthirsty beings in whose honour Canaanites and Moabites, Accadians, Celts, Mexicans, and many others slaughtered their fellow-men and even their own children? What has He in common with the gods (not to descend to the lowest stage) whose power extends over

a limited domain only, who have been born and who die, who are swayed by the lower passions and are subject to human weaknesses? I might reply by asking another question: Have we ourselves nothing in common with the people who worshipped these beings? Is not the difference between their gods and ours essentially the same as the difference which separates them from us, though they were men of the same mould as ourselves? We need not at present inquire into the causes of that difference, as we have investigated them already. It is a difference of capacity and of circumstances, but still more a difference in development—the difference between the grain of mustard-seed and the tree in whose branches lodge the fowls of the air, the difference between the stammering child and the mighty orator, between the unbridled fancy of the youth and the ripe wisdom of the experienced thinker. But the difference is not so great as it appears on the surface. Man climbs up but slowly to such abstract ideas as eternity, omnipresence, and holiness in the ethical sense. But their germ is nevertheless distinctly discernible in the less developed conceptions of deity. Let us then try to ascertain the germ from which the loftier conceptions have gradually developed. I mean the one element which essentially and indispensably constitutes the idea of a god. The conclusion to which the study of religions has led us is, that a god is a *superhuman power*.

This is no mere *a priori* notion, but the result of a careful and many-sided comparative-historical investigation. How such a conception arose—whether it sprang out of the impression produced by the phenomena of nature, and by the action of the powers of nature upon the human mind, or rather out of man's cognition of his own inmost being, which he afterwards applies to all that he perceives around him—we need not at present inquire. We shall seek for its origin at a later stage; but meanwhile our object is to show that even the richest and loftiest conceptions of deity are but developments of this simple germ, and that they lay enshrined within it from the very outset.

The root-idea, then, in every conception of godhead is power. In whatever manner this power is conceived, as physical or rational, as beneficent or malevolent, in whatever way it may be described or defined —as wise, just, and holy, as the power of love, drawing all men together and upholding the moral order of the world, or, according to a well-known dogmatic formula, the power of irresistible grace—the idea of Power is the constant and immutable element, so that a powerless god cannot be a god at all. As soon as the man who is swayed by animistic conceptions begins to think that his fetish is powerless to help him, and has, therefore, deceived him, he casts it aside; for it turns

out not to have been a genuine god after all. In the seventeenth century the Arminians were specially condemned by the Calvinists on the ground that their doctrine of conditional grace seemed to set bounds to the power of the Almighty, which, however, they were by no means disposed to deny. And a couple of centuries later, when the so-called ethical school of theology, with its pessimistic views of the world, tried to save the justice, holiness, and goodness of God by representing the Deity as the power of Good, contending against the natural and moral evil of which it could not be the origin, this, again, was obviously a limitation of God's omnipotence which vitiated the whole system. Even in a sharply defined dualistic system like Zarathushtrism, in which the supremacy of the great god Ahura Mazda, though undisputed in heaven, does not extend over the realms of the lying spirits (*drujas*), and conflicts with that of the arch-daêva, Angra-Mainyu, upon earth—even there the power of the god is superior to that of his adversaries, and is destined to triumph over them in the end.

On a former occasion, in treating of mythology and its interpretation, I had occasion to remark that the religious doctrine of polytheism would never be rightly understood unless the various gods were regarded as personified agencies, as *factores*, *agentes*, or, in other words, as powerful beings revealing themselves in the phenomena; and I am pleased to observe that Professor

Max Müller has recently expressed his concurrence in that view.[1]

The controversy among mythologists as to the physical significance of the gods is well known. There was a time when several different theories were in marked antagonism. One of these regarded nearly the whole of mythology as a description of the storm—of the strife between the evil powers, who try to withhold the beneficent rain, and the good powers who steal water or fire from heaven and cause it to descend upon the earth. Another theory viewed it as symbolising the conflict between light and darkness, between day and night, between summer and winter. According to some theories the marriage of the god of heaven to the goddess of the earth was the ruling idea; according to others all the gods were gods of the sun and moon; and Professor Max Müller has made a very able and learned attempt to show that the myths of the dawn were always the most important, or at least much more so than is commonly supposed. At the present day there is a more general inclination to combine whatever is good and true in each of these antagonistic theories, a movement in which the master of mythological science just mentioned has taken the lead, although we still meet with advocates of a kind

[1] Tiele, Le Mythe de Kronos: Revue de l'Histoire des Religions, 1886, p. 9. F. Max Müller, Physical Religion: Gifford Lectures, ii. p. 131; and also in 'Contributions to the Science of Mythology' (*passim*, v. Index "Gods").

of pass-key theory, or single explanation, with which they seek to unlock almost every myth.[1] I need hardly say that I have no faith in any such universal myth-opener, and that I am not disposed to join any one of these parties. And all the less so because it seems to me a matter of subordinate importance, though not of indifference, to determine the precise natural phenomenon or object from which this or that myth has derived its origin. Even the most ancient interpreters of the myths disagreed on these points, and perhaps from the very outset there was no agreement. For the religious man the chief question is, what his god can effect, what he has to hope or to fear from him. It is quite possible that the Babylonian Maruduk, the Vedic Indra, the Germanic Thor-Donar, and even the Hellenic Zeus, were originally sun-gods; but in the eyes of their worshippers they were mainly the triumphant conquerors of the powers of darkness, aridity, and winter. The names of most of the gods are so ancient that they cannot now be interpreted with any certainty by means of the known forms of language, and that they defy all the re-agents of scientific etymology. But those that we can still interpret, and particularly the epithets applied to the gods, usually denote an operation, a power, or a function. In short, no being is recognised and wor-

[1] Thus, Ernst Siecke, Die Liebesgeschichte des Himmels: Strassburg, 1892; and Die Urreligion der Indogermanen: Berlin, 1897.

shipped as divine except by people who believe it to be the operative power in some natural phenomenon; and when religious and philosophical development has culminated in the idea of an only god, God is mainly regarded as the Almighty, who creates, maintains, and governs the universe.

Now this power of the gods is always deemed a superhuman power—superhuman, but not supersensual or supernatural. In a more advanced stage of development a distinction may be drawn between the sensual and the supersensual, but in the animistic stage no such difference is known. The spirits revered by uncivilised peoples are never immaterial. Nor indeed are even the highest gods in the polytheistic religions of antiquity. But they are all superhuman, at least in the eyes of their worshippers, who often estimate the value of human beings by a different standard from ours. When divine beings are worshipped in the form of mountains, trees, or animals (which entirely differ in kind from the objects known as fetishes), it is only because people who have not yet awoke to full self-consciousness attribute to whatever produces a strong impression on them some secret power, a power greater than their own, or because they admire qualities which they themselves either lack or possess to a very inferior extent. When they have reached a higher stage of civilisation, and out of respect for tradition still retain the old animals or monsters as their gods,

then, as Herodotus relates of the Phœnicians, they allege as their reason the impropriety of making their gods like men—an explanation devised in good faith, though of course an afterthought, in order to account for what seems strange even to themselves. And even where anthropomorphism has attained full sway, where the animals come to be merely temporary metamorphisms, being usually the companions, servants, or symbols of the deities, and where the deities themselves are invariably represented in human form, their worshippers will always be careful to express their superhuman character in some way or other. This is sometimes done in a very naïve manner. The Hindoo gods (in so far as they are no longer therianthropic, half-animal, half-human), such as Ganes'a, the god of wisdom, with his elephant's head, are provided with several heads and pairs of arms. The Babylonian-Assyrian have two pairs of wings. The Homeric are of gigantic stature, or possess a voice as mighty as that of ten thousand men; instead of human blood, a fluid called *ichôr*, the blood of the gods, circulates through their veins; and though they require nourishment like human beings, they live solely on ambrosia, the food of the immortals, which is denied to men. And the power these deities wield is not merely greater than that of mortals, but differs in kind. At first it is generally conceived as sorcery, or as a magical power, from which the idea of miraculous power is developed,

a power which is not bound by the same conditions as human power. The deity simply commands, merely speaks, "and it is done"; the divine word becomes the great creative power. And the belief of monotheism, that with God all things are possible, already exists in embryo in all the conceptions of divine power formed by votaries of the lower nature-religions.

And so, too, the conception of the divine omniscience must have lain dormant in the hearts of the pious long before it was formulated as a doctrine. Odhinn's ravens fly forth throughout the whole world, and on their return they alight on his shoulder and whisper in his ear all they have seen. The Vedic Varuṇa and the Persian Mithra also have their spies (*spas'as*), whom nothing escapes. Satan, whom the author of the Book of Job includes among the Sons of Elohîm, scours the whole earth, and then appears before His throne to render his report, although Yahve already knows everything. Each god does not know everything—for that would be inconsistent with polytheism—but the gods collectively know everything, while from the great heavenly god of Light nothing can remain hidden.

With the doctrine of omniscience is closely connected that of omnipresence. The numerous gods of polytheism cannot of course be omnipresent. Each of them has his own domain, to which his power is usually restricted. On earth each of them has one or more favourite haunts, while in heaven he possesses his own

glorious abode. The exuberant oriental imagination surpasses itself when it tries to describe the palaces of the Indian Devas and the Zarathushtrian Yazatas. The poets of the Edda mention ten heavenly abodes of the Asas, of which Odhinn's Walhalla is the chief, and Baldur's Breidhablik is the purest. The homes of the Olympians have been built by Hephæstus round the summit of Olympus, on which Zeus himself is enthroned. But none of them is bound to a fixed abode. They roam wherever they please with marvellous rapidity. With holy awe the pious man sometimes finds his god close to him when he supposed him far distant. "Surely," exclaims Jacob at Bethel, on awakening from his dream, "surely Yahve is in this place!" The fact that his own god should appear to him, at a place where a different local god was worshipped, filled his heart with joy. That some god dwelt and ruled in this region, as in every region, probably neither he nor any other of the ancients doubted for a moment. What in monotheism becomes the omnipresence of a single god is in polytheism the omnipresence of the divine in many different forms and persons. Wherever one may be, wherever one may go, there a superhuman power works and reigns. This belief is common to all peoples and all ages.

As the æsthetic sentiment is developed, the gods are more and more endowed with superhuman beauty. In the plastic representation of the gods the Greeks stood

pre-eminent. Their gods have human forms, but they are idealised forms of masculine and feminine beauty. Still loftier is the conception of a divine glory which dazzles poor mortals, a glory which indeed man cannot behold and live. The prophet to whom a glimpse of it was vouchsafed had to cover his face, and durst not look up until Yahve had passed by, so that he could only see the skirts of the divine garment. This idea belongs entirely to the Semitic conception of faith, in which God's loftiness stands out in the foreground; and when we encounter it in the Greek myth of Zeus and Semele, it seems unquestionably to be one of those features which Hellenic mythology borrowed from the East. But the needs that found expression in these immortal works of art and in the conceptions of the divine glory are precisely the same as those manifested in childish fashion by the savage who bedecks his poor idols with gaudy cloth and all kinds of finery, so as to render them glorious in his eyes, and by the simple-minded votary of Rome, who bedizens his Madonna with gilded crowns and showy drapery.

The development of the ethical sentiment is a very different matter. It is not until a late period that the religiously disposed man strives to express the superhuman character of his gods by ascribing to them ethical attributes. They become the vindicators of law, the rewarders of virtue, the punishers of vice: they have imposed the moral law on mortals, and

require them to observe it; but at first they themselves are exalted above it. A god is never bound by the obligations he has imposed upon men. He acts according to his good pleasure—for the superhuman knows no limits. This is the ideal of the undeveloped believer. He regards the moral law as heteronomous, being imposed on him from without, and as a collection of commands and prohibitions which he ought to obey, but which he cannot obey without denying himself and sacrificing his own inclinations and desires. It stands to reason, he thinks, that a power which is independent of all others is under no obligation to obey the laws which it imposes upon men. But when man's ethical consciousness has advanced so far as to substitute the autonomous for the heteronomous principle, and when he has learned to measure human worth by an ethical standard, he can no longer regard beings, however powerful they may be, as exalted above him if they are morally his inferiors. The conviction thus ripens within him that the moral element is not a mere arbitrary ordinance, in conflict with human nature, but is a revelation of his own inmost being, and must for that very reason be an attribute of the deity who is the author of his higher nature. He then ceases to seek for the superhuman in external splendour and glory, or merely in a power which transcends that of man, but conceives his God as one who possesses in perfection all the moral qualities which he

has learned to appreciate in man more than all other endowments. The Unapproachable then becomes the Holy One, and justly so, because "He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity." The highest power then becomes all-embracing love. And so he deems his God to be in blissful possession of that infinite perfection to which no man can attain, but which is nevertheless the object of his ceaseless endeavour.

We are now, however, confronted with a question with which many minds are always busied. How can a pure and perfect world be the origin, or (to put the question in a personal form) how can a perfect and at the same time all-powerful God be the author, of a world in which physical and moral evil are so predominant? Polytheism found no difficulty in answering this question. The world of gods is divided into two different classes—the beneficent or naturally good gods, and the gods who are dreaded, the former being the givers of all blessings, and the latter the authors of all disasters, of death, destruction, and all evil; and both kinds must therefore be worshipped in order to gain their favour or avert their wrath. But in the ethical religions believers could no longer be satisfied with such a solution. They could not regard evil spirits as worthy of adoration. In their view the two classes of gods become two hostile camps. On the one side stood the good God with his satellites, on the other the realm of the powers of darkness and destruc-

tion, of sin and wickedness, which had to be resisted and slain with the help of the good spirits. Over against Ormazd, the giver of all good (*dâta vañghvãm*), is placed Ahriman, who is full of death (*pouru-mahrka*), and over against the immortal benefactors (*amesha speñta*) and the adorable ones (*yazata*) stand the daêvas and the lying spirits (*drujas*). This is the doctrine of the Zarathushtrian religion, in which the principle is most strictly adhered to. But even there people were not always satisfied with a God who, though indeed higher and more powerful than his adversary, and destined ultimately to triumph over him, had to submit for a time at least to the withdrawal of a great part of the "embodied world," his own creation, from his jurisdiction. The theologians came to the rescue. They exalted an abstract idea, Unending Time (*zrvan akaranam*), to the rank of the highest god, the father of both Ahura Mazda and Angra-Mainyu, although the text of the sacred writings on which they relied merely imports that Ahura Mazda "created in unending time." This doctrine, though regarded as heretical by the orthodox Zarathushtrians, was for a time officially accepted under one of the Sâsânides, but was soon afterwards condemned. An abstraction could not long remain a popular god. And perhaps it was felt that the difficulty was not thereby removed, but merely shifted. Another expedient to which they had recourse was the idea that man is free, but that he has abused

his freedom, and that for this abuse he has been punished by means of sickness and other evils inflicted by Nature herself; but they overlooked the question whether the omnipotence of God would not be infringed by such freedom. Others have denied the absolute nature of sin (Pfleiderer), and have represented physical evil as a necessary means of education, as the shadow without which there can be no light. It is beyond our province to investigate this problem. It suffices for us, in this connection, to note the fact that man's religious consciousness has invariably caused the rejection of every system which limited the omnipotence of God in order that His holiness, righteousness, and love might be preserved intact. A perfect solution of the problem would require omniscience, and transcends the human mind. But for the pious of all ages, although they are fully aware that they are confronted with an inexplicable riddle, the answer is essentially the same as that given in Israel in ancient times: "God's ways are higher than our ways, and His thoughts are higher than our thoughts; God is great, and we cannot comprehend Him." Or, to express this in the terms we have already employed: the divine power is superhuman, and therefore inscrutable.

To this definition of gods as superhuman powers it will perhaps be objected that it is imperfect, and that it is not every superhuman power, though recognised as such, that is recognised as a god. Shall we, like

Rauwenhoff, for example, argue as follows?—"No one is a god *jure suo;* but he has only become a god through the deification he has received from his worshippers. Not only does this hold true of the first time when a man has recognised his god in a supposed supersensual power, but it always continues to be true, and is indeed the general rule in all subsequent and in all future development of religion. To be a power of nature or to be a spirit is not yet to be a god. Such a power only becomes a god when it is worshipped. Even the most primitive religions consist, not in the worship of every kind of natural phenomenon and every kind of spirit, but they invariably select one or more of these, to the exclusion of the others, and promote them to the rank of deities. One only of all the spirits dwelling in animals is elected by the American Totemist to be his god;" and might we not then arrive with him at the conclusion that the origin of religion is to be explained "from the coincidence of the moral consciousness of man with the naturistic or animistic view of nature?"[1] I cannot concur in this. The proposition that no one is a god *jure suo* rests, if I mistake not, on a confusion of special conceptions of belief with the general conception of a god. The cause of the confusion is, that we generally use the same

[1] Rauwenhoff: 'Wijsbegeerte van den Godsdienst,' pp. 72, 73, 99. I have somewhat condensed the author's argument, but have used his own words as far as possible.

word for both. We call Zeus, Wodan, Indra, Varuṇa, Brahma, Vishṇu, and S'iva gods, although they are in reality only the special conceptions formed by different peoples in different ages of their highest god. It stands to reason that they are gods only to those who, I do not say worship them, but who believe in their existence and power, and that, with their last worshippers, they have lost, or will lose, their dignity of godhead. The only question that concerns us is, what in all these changing conceptions is abiding, what men in all ages have had in view when speaking of "God." Moreover it is not because it is worshipped that a power of nature, or power of any description, or a spirit of whatever kind, becomes a god, but it is worshipped because it has already been recognised as a god. Nor can it even be asserted that, in the animistic or the polytheistic stage of religion, persons or communities regard those superhuman powers which they worship as the only gods in existence. They admit the existence and the dignity of many others also as such. When they enter their domain, or have reason to dread their power, they will even do them homage. When they learn that the gods of their neighbours are very wise, and are thus better able to help them, they will consult their oracles and offer them costly gifts. Thus Ahaziah, King of Israel, sent a mission to Ba'al-zebub, the god of Ekron, to the great indignation of the prophet of Yahve. So, too, will an

Asiatic prince beg the Egyptian king, son of the Sun, for the loan of one of his gods in order to cure his daughter of her sickness, the gods of his own land having proved unequal to the task. And when the mighty conqueror Sennacherib (Sin-ahi-irba) is about to organise a naval expedition, he hastens to present rich offerings to Ea, god of the sea, though on his return to Nineveh or Kalach he would certainly have worshipped none but Assur, and the gods who had their temples there. Can we therefore say that Ea was his god solely during the time when he did homage to him, but neither before nor after that time? Why, it may be asked, does the polytheist not worship all the gods whose power he admits? Simply because it would be impossible. On the other hand, he will take good care not to offend them. Like the Hindoo, he will not neglect to invoke the Vis've devâḥ, or "all the gods," as well as those he specially reveres; or, like the Roman, after having named his own gods, he will add: "Sive quo alio nomine te appellari volueris"; or, like the Athenian, he will by way of precaution erect an altar to the Unknown God. And so, too, the Totemist, while choosing a special tutelary spirit, just as you or I might choose a particular physician, does not deny the existence of others. And neither Redskin, nor Babylonian, nor Assyrian, who speak of their own special gods, nor the Pârsee, who believes that every one has his

Fravashi, nor the Roman, who sacrifices to his own Lar familiaris, will on that account omit to serve the gods of their tribe or country. How divine service originated is a question to be considered at a later stage. But we may for the present lay it down as a well-established proposition, that the religious man in general regards as a god every superhuman power whose existence he owns; that the polytheist recognises, besides his own gods, many others whom he has no occasion, or is not bound, to worship; and that the monotheist acknowledges a single and almighty God, by whatsoever name He may be called.

Is it necessary to add to our definition, that, in order to stamp a superhuman power as a deity, it should be worthy of adoration? I do not think so. I am, however, far from maintaining that every power of nature, as such, is regarded as a god, even by the least cultured of men. Certainly not those which he has learned to control. When he has grown up to full self-consciousness he feels that he is superior to all the blind powers of nature, though he is physically weaker than they. The materialist, who sees nothing in the universe but the operation of such powers, takes leave of religion altogether. Men worship that only which they deem above them. Not the beast of prey, whose claws make them tremble, nor the bloodthirsty tyrant who persecutes them, but those beings alone whom they judge superior to man. As long as they imagine that in

a tree, or in an animal, or in the firmament of heaven dwells a spirit mightier than their own, and one that can therefore influence the destiny and welfare of themselves and their families, so long will they worship the tree, or animal, or firmament, or rather the spirits residing in them. But as soon as they become conscious of the superiority of the human mind they will cease to worship these objects. As long as they occupy a low stage of ethical development they will worship even evil spirits, whether injurious to man or not. But as soon as they have awoke to moral consciousness, they will contend against these evil spirits, with the aid of the good divine powers, and they will worship them no longer. They still believe in their power; but it is not a divine power, for it is doomed to destruction—the power of goodness and truth will ultimately triumph over it. The power of the evil spirits is indeed greater than their own, but not superhuman, although perhaps we may call it supersensual. The Zarathushtrian erects no altars to Ahriman, nor does the mediæval Christian build chapels for Satan, however much they may dread these spirits. The Mohammedan casts stones at Iblis, and our Christian forefathers delighted in popular tales in which the devil was tricked or held up to derision. But to a power which he regards as superhuman man looks up with awe, and he speaks of it with reverence.

We thus reach the conclusion, that men of all ages have conceived the divine as a power operating in every kind of natural phenomenon, as supernatural, not merely in the sense of being greater than human power, but as being bound by none of the conditions, and subject to none of the limitations, attached to human power. Regarded, in the earlier stages of the development of belief, as a magical power or as a miraculous power (for, as Goethe has said, "das Wunder ist des Glaubens liebstes Kind"), the most advanced believers regard it as the mysterious power in which the ultimate cause of the world of phenomena is to be sought; a power unlimited and unrestricted in time and space, a power immutable, whatever else may change or perish. It is merely a question of development, as well as of disposition, whether this power be distributed among many persons or embraced in one alone. But it is always the highest in its own province, it is always unique of its kind; and even where it is divided among many, its agency is everywhere: it is the ultimate cause of all that exists, of all that happens. The world of the divine, as men thus conceive it, is not merely higher than, but different from, our world of natural phenomena, because it is an ideal world. But it is only in contrast to ours in so far as it is perfect and infinite, while ours is imperfect and finite.

Our next lecture will be devoted to an examination of the relation between these two worlds.

LECTURE V.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD AND MAN.

At our previous meetings we examined one of the foundations on which religion rests, or perhaps I should rather say one of the indispensable elements in which religion consists—I mean man's belief in a superhuman power which works everywhere and in everything. This is not a mere philosophical theory or an abstraction designed to satisfy man's craving for knowledge, nor is it a purely mental attempt to account for the world of phenomena we see around us—whether that world be the whole universe, such as we conceive it to be, or merely that limited portion of it that falls within the ken of uncivilised or primitive man, and constitutes his whole world—but it is a religious conviction, that is to say, it exerts a direct and immediate influence on man's emotional life. For the phenomena which the religious man thus accounts for are precisely those which are bound up with his existence, his welfare, and his whole destiny; and the

conviction that they reveal to him a superhuman power at once awakens in him a corresponding sentiment of awe and veneration, of gratitude and trust, towards that power, and a sense of his obligation to obey and revere it above all others. Without this belief no religion can possibly exist. It is the fountainhead of all religions. If it is lost, the old religious institutions may for a time be maintained, and the performance of the old religious observances may for a time be ensured, by the force of habit and tradition, but the life of such a religion is extinct. Just as the machine must soon stop when its motive power has ceased to act, although its wheels may continue idly to revolve a little longer, so must such a religion inevitably perish. A God above us—that is the belief without which no religious life is possible.

Does this imply that the moment we feel compelled to reject the popular notion of the Divinity, the moment we begin to hesitate to discern God, with reverential awe, in the highly anthropomorphised image which is regarded by most people as the only true God, we must forthwith renounce religion altogether? Let us distinctly understand each other. It is never a single definite conception, as such, that constitutes the foundation of religion. Conceptions change; the imperfect are superseded by perfect, the impure by the pure, the lower by the higher; but the thing that abides, that underlies them all, is the one idea which they all strive

to express in their different ways. All we have done, and were bound to do, has been to trace out and establish that idea. If our object had been to construct a philosophical system of religion, we should now have to inquire into everything that is involved in that idea, or that of necessity flows from it, into the primitive myths and the later dogmas, such as those of the creation, of Providence, and of the government of the world, in which the idea has been more or less imperfectly manifested. We should have to test the dogmas by the idea itself, and show what truth they contain, or how far they are to be regarded as mere imperfect human allegories. We cannot, however, attempt so great a task. Our object is solely to offer you an introduction to the science of religion, and to sketch its elements, while in this ontological part of our course our special aim is to discover what is the permanent element in the multiplicity of changing forms. Yet there is one side-issue which we must not omit to notice. Belief in a superhuman power is a very positive belief, a belief in one or more actual divine beings. Now people sometimes object to attribute personality and self-consciousness to the Godhead, as importing a humanising, and therefore a limitation and degradation, of the Deity. But remember that we cannot even speak of the superhuman except after the analogy of the human, or form any conception of God except with the aid of the highest conceptions known to us, which

in the domain of man's spiritual life are his personality and his self-consciousness. One thing is certain. When devout persons necessarily regard their God as a superhuman being, He cannot be less than man, He cannot be unconscious and impersonal, or He would cease to be a god at all, and to be worthy of adoration. It is beyond our province to inquire how far a philosophical system might be built upon the foundation of an unconscious and impersonal power, but no religion could exist on such a basis. If personality and self-consciousness be terms which we may not apply to the Almighty without derogation, let us admit that no human language can describe His being. But to predicate the contrary of Him would be a far graver derogation, and would be no better than atheism. That "God is a Spirit" is, in brief, the creed of man throughout all ages; and religious man feels the need of ascribing to his God in perfection all the attributes he has learned to regard as the highest and noblest in his own spirit.

And all the more so because no religion is possible unless man feels that he is related to God. And this naturally leads us to consider the other essential of religion, which is to be the subject of our studies to-day.

Not only that "God is above us," but also that "God is in us," is a belief common to all religions. It is probably unnecessary to prove, nor can it indeed be

disputed, that this idea attained full development in the earliest stage of Christianity. The religion which regards God as the Father of all, and all men as His children, thus teaches the closest relationship between God and man; and this is precisely the doctrine that underlies the whole of the Gospel preaching. How this doctrine afterwards developed into the doctrines of the God-Man and the Trinity we may assume to be sufficiently well known to all. Our task is merely to show how this idea has found expression everywhere and in all ages, although in widely differing conceptions, myths, emblems, and symbolic observances, and to trace its source back to the simplest forms of religious worship.

You will remember that we have divided the chief religions of antiquity into two categories, according as the idea of God's supremacy over the world and man, or man's relationship with God, has been placed in the foreground and predominantly developed. The first category I called the *theocratic*, in which the deity stands forth chiefly as a ruler and a king, and the second the *theanthropic*, which mainly emphasises the unity of God and man. That the latter should lay the chief stress upon the religious anthropological principle was of course to be expected. But this principle is by no means lacking, and is sometimes very distinctly enunciated, in the theocratic religions also. Does not the Hebrew—whose religion may be taken as one of

the most pronounced types of this class—regard man as created in God's own image, and did not Yahve Elohim breathe his divine breath into the nostrils of this his latest creation? Was it not recorded that both the patriarch Abraham and the prophet Moses communed as familiarly with God as men with their friends, and that Israel actually wrestled with Him and overcame Him? Was it not vouchsafed to Elijah to obtain a glimpse of Yahve's glory, and was he not taken up to Him in the chariot of fire? And although the Psalmist asks, "What is man that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that Thou visitest him?" yet he immediately adds, "Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels" (*i.e.*, the "Elohîm," or gods). In the prophets, in the sacred singers, and even in the cunning artificers, the divine Spirit was believed to dwell and to work, for a time at least; and the prophet Jeremiah even looked forward to a time when all mankind should partake of this inspiration. These are surely sufficient proofs that the idea of God's spirit dwelling in man was by no means foreign to this most theocratic of all the religions of antiquity.

In the cognate theocratic religions of Western Asia the world of the gods and that of man are less strongly contrasted than in the Hebrew; and the older the religions are, or the earlier developed, the less marked is the contrast. In the Babylonian religion, for example, we meet with a legend analogous to the narrative in

the second chapter of Genesis. Bel—that is in this case Maruduk, the creator — is here represented as making men of clay mixed with his own blood, a legend whose symbolical signification is obvious. Here, too, the legends mention a marriage between a deity and a mortal, and in the narrative of the Deluge men are regarded as the children of Ishtar; while not only the king, who in the earliest times was even worshipped as a divine being, but every pious man, is spoken of as "a son of his god" (*ablu ilišu*). This idea of regarding the relation between the theocratic god and his people as a nuptial tie is also, as you will remember, not unfamiliar to the prophets of Israel.

In the Egyptian religion, which, like the ancient Babylonian before it was modified by Semitic influence, belonged to a very early stage of religious development, we find the two ideas of "the deity as a superhuman power" and of "man as related to the deity," existing side by side, unsophisticated and unreconciled. Before the time of Menes, who is supposed to be the earliest historical king, the gods themselves ruled on earth in successive dynasties, and every subsequent human king was regarded as a son of the Sun, born into the world by the great Mother-goddess. When men were created by the sun-god Ra, the hidden sun-god Tum gave them a soul like his own. Every dead man, provided only he is in possession of the

magic texts, becomes in the lower world Osiris himself, and after he has in that shape triumphed over the powers of darkness and death, he is permitted to go forth into day in the train of the sun-god Ra and to navigate the heavenly waters in the boat of the sun. Even the living, by dint of reciting the magical books destined for the purpose, may assume the form of gods, and as such may overcome the hostile powers which threaten them on earth. Famous kings even have their own temples and priesthood, and their worship continues in vogue for ages in spite of the changes of dynasty. And not only they, but every one who was in a position to found for himself a tomb, or everlasting home, was honoured by his successors with gifts and sacrifices in the chapel connected with it. It is well known how punctiliously the Chinese observed similar duties, during the period prior to that of Kong-tse, when their religion occupied the same plane of development as that of the Egyptians, and what a prominent place they gave to the worship of deceased ancestors, so that we might describe their religion as anthropocentric, as being one in which the souls of men occupied an intermediate place between the heavenly and the earthly spirits.

In the case of the theanthropic religions it is unnecessary to enter into matters of detail. Their general character implies that they lay the chief stress upon man's relationship with God. In them there exists

no sharp line of demarcation between the human and the divine. The world of the gods and that of man coalesce. Gods become men without losing their dignity, while men are elevated to the rank of gods. In the course of the one-sided development of these religions—as, for example, in the latest Vedic period—the world of the gods sometimes becomes a kind of aristocracy, which holds aloof from such *parvenus* as those deified sorcerers, the Ṛbhus, as being still tainted with a human odour, while it cannot deny them their right to receive sacrifices. Were I, however, to pursue this theme further, I should have to repeat much of what I have already said in my description of the theanthropic religions. To that description, therefore, I beg to refer you.

But with regard to the lower nature-religions I should like to say a word. In these, of course, everything is magical. By this magical power the Shaman in his ecstasy ascends to heaven, or descends to the subterranean spirits. But this magical power is possessed by him in common with the higher spirits, and does not differ from theirs. In some cases there is formed an aristocracy, or superior caste, to which the rank, the honours, and the prerogatives of the gods are conceded, and which forms a transition from man to the higher beings. In the religious observances the magician-priests entirely supersede the gods and assume their forms. The founder of the race is

usually a son of the chief god, born supernaturally, or is the deity himself. And here, too, the dead are invariably regarded as having been admitted to the order of spirits, and their souls are worshipped as spirits.

There are two widely diffused groups, partly of myths and partly of legends, which owe their origin to the fundamental idea with which we are now dealing. They occur among peoples of every rank — at one time as childish tales, at another in the form of beautiful poetry. I allude to the representations of Paradise and the predictions of a glorious future for mankind upon earth. These are complementary to each other, and the latter may even be said to be postulated by the former, although in many cases, as in the Old Testament, the legends of Paradise are alone preserved, while the images of a blissful future are converted into higher ethical expectations. Pure and unblemished, according to the Hebrew tradition, our first parents roamed at large in the garden belonging to Yahve's own dwelling, where the Deity himself walked to enjoy the cool of the evening. As yet they were tormented by no cares, they were disquieted by no desires; as yet they were exempt from the obligation to labour in the sweat of their brows, and from gloomy forebodings of death. Such is the narrative of the Book of Genesis. During the thousand years' reign of Yima, as the Avesta informs us, men lived on earth in perfect happiness, and — according to some accounts, while death was

unknown—the human race increased continuously, and the earth had repeatedly to be enlarged. Sick and infirm persons, liars and evil-doers, were as yet unknown; as yet Angra-Mainyu, the Evil One, was powerless. Life was supremely happy. Of each pair, once every forty years, was born another pair. And when the overwhelming and devastating winter, which in the Zarathushtrian legends takes the place of the Deluge, threatened man with destruction, Yima, warned by Ahura Mazda, and by his command, constructed a *vara* or enclosure, which protected his first human race against the impending catastrophe, and enabled them to continue their blissful existence undisturbed.[1] In the Bundahish, the more recent sacred book of the Zarathushtrians, which, however, contains many ancient elements, there also occurs a tradition concerning the first human pair which is very analogous to the narrative of the second and third chapters of Genesis, although differing from it in details. The Greeks, too, used to speak of a golden age, in which men still lived innocently, and therefore happily, but which was soon succeeded by other ages marked by a constant decline. For all these beautiful dreams belong

[1] Compare the later form of this tradition in "Dînâ-î-Maî-nôg-î-Khirad," xxvii. 24, 'Sacred Books of the East,' vol. xxiv. (West), p. 59, and its adaptation to the ancestral home of the Aryans in Mînokhard, xliv. 24, in Darmesteter's Zend-Avesta, ii. p. 30, note 64. My version of the tradition deviates slightly from the text, as I have tried to give it the form I believe it to have had before its Zarathushtrian modification.

to a past for ever ended. Paradise has been lost, and may never again be entered by man. Man, the Son of the gods, and once privileged to live in proximity to the deity, has fallen from his high estate, chiefly through his own fault and through disobedience to the divine commands. The divine image has become faint, if not entirely effaced. Man must now maintain his life by means of toilsome labour. He must battle against disease and disaster; few are his days and full of woe. The "afterthought" of Epimetheus has frustrated the wise "forethought" of Prometheus. And at the bottom of Pandora's box—that fateful gift of the gods, from which a host of evils and sufferings escaped to overspread the whole earth—hope alone remains behind.

Yet a hope not entirely vain. For hope is too deeply rooted in the human heart to admit of the general acceptance of such a pessimistic view as that indicated by the Greek myth. The beautiful pictures of an irrevocable past are transferred to the future. Hope's anticipations are now of two kinds, earthly and heavenly. People who cherish hopes of the earthly kind dream, like the ancient Germans, of a new earth purified by fire, an earth purged of all evil, a kind of second Paradise, where mankind, likewise regenerated by fire, will live happily in the society of the best of the gods. Such was the hope of the Greek, when the sway of Zeus and the Olympians should once be ended.

Prometheus would be unfettered, and mankind would be delivered from all its miseries. Such more especially was the hope of the devout Pârsee. During the thousand years' reign of Hûshêdarmâh, which was to precede the advent of the Saviour Sôshyans, men were gradually to return to the sinless state of the first human pair, and during the last ten years they were even to abstain entirely from food and yet live. Then comes the Redeemer. All the dead, from Gâyômard, the protoplast, and from Mâshya and Mâshyôi, the first human pair, onwards, are raised, and the righteous and the wicked are separated. The earth is burnt up, and in the ocean of molten metal which overflows its whole surface all are purified, the wicked only after suffering terrible tortures, and the righteous after experiencing merely a pleasant warmth. All then receive from Sôshyans a food which renders them immortal. The evil spirits are conquered and slain, or driven unresisting into outer darkness. Even hell itself is purified and added to the earth; and in this enlarged world, where there will be no more ice and no more mountains, men are to be immortal, and to live for ever united with their families and relations, but without further offspring, in pure and peaceful bliss.[1] We only learn these concep-

[1] See Bundahish xxx., 'Sacred Books of the East' v. (West), pp. 120-130. According to the Shâyast-lâ-Shâyast, xvii., 7, ib., p. 384 *seq.*, those who have committed heinous sins, or have practised heretical rites, are not to be raised from the dead, for they have already passed over to the Daêvas. This modification of the popular creed was obviously made by the theologians.

tions from very late sources, but even in the earliest documents they are alluded to as belonging to an already existing popular creed. The ideal of the earliest Zarathushtrian prophets of salvation was much more sober and ethical, and consisted in the triumphant supremacy of the good God over all men, an ideal more closely approaching the expectations of the prophets of Israel, of which the first preaching of the Gospel formed the fulfilment.

But alongside of these representations of a future state of bliss on earth there often occur, in the same religion, others of a different character, which however rather supplement than exclude them, and which relate to the fate of men after death. Thus the Greeks had their Elysian fields, destined for heroes alone; the Scandinavians had their Valhöll and Folkvang, where the warriors who fell in battle banqueted with Odhin and Freya; and the Zarathushtrians their Garôdmana, the abode of Ahura Mazda and his satellites, connected with earth by a bridge which for the righteous is broad and commodious, but for the wicked sharp as a razor, so that they inevitably tumble off it into hell. I cite these examples only because they relate to the peoples whose belief in a regeneration of mankind I have already mentioned. But there are thousands of other forms which the belief in immortality assumes, and which it would be impossible even to name at present. Suffice it to say that it occurs everywhere and among all

peoples, whatever be their stage of progress, and wherever it has not been as yet undermined by any philosophic doubts, or thrust into the background by other causes, and that in every case it is found in connection with religion. It may possibly have sprung up independently, and quite apart from religious motives (a matter which we cannot now investigate); it seems certain, however, that it did not spring from the sentiment of man's relationship with God, but that both have the same origin, while the belief in immortality, once brought into connection with religion, usually takes the form of a union with the deity, or at least of an entrance into the world of the gods and a participation in their society. This is most apparent in the Egyptian religion, in which this very doctrine is elaborated with special predilection. That this view was practically universal we learn from the worship of the dead, of which we have already spoken. The Babylonian legend of Ishtar's descent into hell depicts in sombre colours the "land whence no man returns" (*irṣit lâ tarat*), where the dreaded Allat rules over the dead and dispenses all kinds of torture; but at the same time it pictures in words and images a state of happiness in which the pious man sits down with his God under the tree of life. We meet with both types almost everywhere. And as soon as more advanced moral sentiment asserts itself, and the idea of retribution has been combined with that of a future existence, the lower world, once

the destination of almost all the dead, is converted into a place of punishment and torment, while heavenly bliss is awarded to the pious alone. For it is the general belief of all peoples that every man goes to his own proper place; the warriors who have fallen in battle enter the abode of the hero-gods; Hêraklês, the mighty hero, who spent a life of toil and conflict in the service of humanity, is received into Olympus; Enoch, Moses, and Elijah, God's chosen friends, instead of descending into the sombre lower regions, are taken up directly to Him; and (when the ethical idea has effectually asserted its influence) the pious go to Him whom they have served faithfully, while the godless, who have forsaken their god and his commandments, are consigned to the powers of darkness to be punished as they have deserved.

No one will deny that the idea of relationship with God is but imperfectly expressed in all these images, and that they are but attempts to give it shape; yet the religious thought that underlies them is that man "is of God, and through God, and to God," and is destined at last to be reunited with Him.

But poetic imagination could not rest satisfied until it had found a more concrete form for this religious conception. Its supreme effort accordingly finds expression in the belief in a Mediator—that is, as Pfleiderer has aptly described such a being, "the combination of the divine with the human into a personal unity, in

external objectivity." However much mortal man may be conscious of the divine within him, God and man ever present the contrast of Infinite and Finite, of the perfect and the imperfect. Now, as experience, progress in self-knowledge, and the development of mortal consciousness gradually beget and confirm in man the conviction that he answers but poorly to his high lineage and destiny, and as, on the other hand, religious thought gradually creates a loftier conception of the Deity, the gulf between the two ever widens, and it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain the former root-idea without prejudicing the latter. And he accordingly fills up the gulf with all kinds of intermediate beings. On earth he fills it with persons of specially religious character, with prophets, priests, teachers, leaders, and reformers, whom his imagination glorifies, and to whom he often ascribes supernatural holiness. In heaven, or at least in the region between heaven and earth, he fills the gulf with the ministers and messengers of God, such as the Babylonian Nusku, the Indian Agni Nâras'aṅsa, the Avestic Sraosha, the Greek Hermes, or such as the Angels and Sons of God,—the Hebrew Male'akîm and Bnê Elohîm, by means of whom the supreme deity communes with men; he fills it too with inferior gods, who are less remote from man, and whose intercession with the most high he invokes. But while the first of these classes consists of men more gifted than their fellows, or raised above them by divine consecration and unction,

or possessed of extraordinary knowledge, yet they are not one with God, nor have they, as a rule, a definite divine origin assigned to them. The second order of beings, on the other hand, is not human, but superhuman. In these orders, the lower divine and the higher human come very nearly into contact, so that the gulf is to some extent filled up, although not entirely closed. This can only be accomplished by the conception of a being who partakes of both natures alike, who is at once God and man, a true son of God and true son of man. By means of such a bold flight of imagination the conflicting natures are reconciled, the heterogeneous elements coalesce in a unity.

The belief in Mediators between the divine world and the human, who belong to both alike, is a very general one, and is manifested in many different forms. In some cases they are gods who descend to earth and become men, or for a time at least associate as men with men; as Apollo with Admetus; or like the numerous Avatâras of the god Vishṇu, including even the Buddha, and among whom Kṛshṇa occupied the foremost rank; or like the Scandinavian god Heimdall, who by his union with three earthly wives became the father of the three estates of nobles, freemen, and serfs, and whose posterity thus in a very special manner illustrates the kinship between gods and men. In other cases these Mediators are demi-gods, men born of a union between gods and mortals, such as Hêraklês,

Bellerophôn, Perseus, Thêseus, and Dionysus, who were believed to have been actually born on earth, though of divine origin, and to have lived and worked on earth —Heroes, that is, Saviours and Redeemers, as they were called—and some of whom, either as a reward for their achievements, or merely on account of their divine lineage, were raised to the rank of gods and worshipped as such. And often they are actual historical personages, glorified and afterwards deified by a grateful posterity. Such were a number of kings, like the ancient Sargon of Agade in Babylonia, and sages, like Lao-tse and Kong-tse in China, and, above all, reformers whose work and preaching called a new religion into life, like Mahâvîra the Jina, Gautama the Buddha, and Zarathushtra Spitama, after whom the Jainas, the Buddhists, and the Zarathushtrians are respectively named. The history of most of these personages consists so largely, if not entirely, of myths, chiefly myths of the sun-gods adapted to them, that it has even been doubted whether they ever existed at all. But such an inference is unwarrantable. Once they were raised to the rank of gods or adorable beings, the actual memorials of their lives, so far as they still existed, would thenceforth be of little use, or would at least seem inadequate, and had therefore to be replaced or supplemented by miraculous tales. That such tales, borrowed mostly from the Mithras legend, were transferred to Christ also, chiefly in the apocryphal Gospels and the Golden Legend, will

not be denied even by those who are disposed to accept as pure history the whole of the narrative of the canonical Gospels. It is, however, certain that the dogma of the Son of God, true God and true man, which attained its highest mystic expression in the dogma of the Trinity, has been throughout long ages one of the chief corner-stones of the creed of the great majority of Christians, however different their religious views might be in other respects. Although unable to withstand the searching scrutiny of sober, rational logic, owing to the (from a purely rationalistic standpoint) irreconcilable contradiction of the two terms which compose the expression God-man, this dogma has ever been cherished by all the Christian churches as a religious truth, and one of the most important of all. And accordingly, with due religious consistency, they condemn as heretical the teaching of those who deny either of these terms, —both that of the Docetes, who rejected the true manhood of Jesus, declaring it to be apparent only, and that of the Rationalists, who rejected the divinity of Christ.

It is not the business of the science of religion to maintain or defend, still less to dispute or destroy, this or any other dogma, or any religious conception as such. Its duty is merely to explain. But here it is confronted with the question — How comes it that this doctrine of the God-man occurs, not only in the theanthropic religions, which with more or less bias place the immanence of God in the foreground, but even in

the Christian religions, which all spring from a common religious communion, having emanated from the strongly theocratic Judaism, whose God was transcendental, if one ever was? How has this doctrine come to occupy so prominent and so central a place that its denial is regarded by most Christians as a denial of Christianity itself, and tantamount to unbelief? To this there can be but one answer—Because it satisfies the deepest needs of the religious soul.

In the first place, there is need of communion with the Divinity. The result of the development of religion on the theocratic lines was an ever-increasing exaltation, by means of spiritualisation, of the conception of God. Even the great Persian reformer had already, in Ahura Mazda, held up to his people as an object of adoration a god far above all the nature-gods they had hitherto worshipped. In Greece, by the philosophers at least, the anthropomorphic conception of Zeus and the other gods was vigorously disputed. How much more emphatically would the like be done by the Israelites, whose God, the Holy and Invisible, dwells in secret, who is unapproachable, to whom weak mortals, conscious of their immeasurable inferiority, scarce dare to draw near with fear and trembling? The more abstract, and the further divested of human imagery, the conception of God becomes, the more difficult it is found by man to seek and to maintain communion with so exalted a Being. Without such

communion his faith is a dead and barren faith. He desires to feel that he is near his God, and that his God is near him. The worshipper wishes to possess as his own the object of his worship. He wishes to love it with his whole soul; but how can he love what is raised so far above him, and almost defies the possibility of conception? This need is satisfied by the conception of the God-man. Here is a being like himself, and yet far above him, a being that he can love and adore at the same time. He cannot see his God; but here is a being who says to him—"He who sees me, sees the Father"—here is His image. The perfection of God overwhelms him; here is a being to whom he can give himself, whom he can at least try to follow, and by becoming whose likeness he may strive to the utmost of his power to become a likeness and a follower of God.

And in the second place, in order to strengthen his sentiment of relationship with the Deity, man feels the need of beholding in a concrete image, formed by a union of the divine and the human, the true divinity of the highest humanity. In his Gifford Lectures ('The Evolution of Religion') Professor Edward Caird has repeatedly made a very striking remark, and one which may indeed be described as a psychological discovery, to the effect that in the human mind the idea of the Infinite precedes that of the Finite. The finite we know by experience alone; of the infinite, experience

teaches us nothing. On the contrary, the infinite is in irreconcilable conflict with all our experience. Nor is it the result of reasoning, for there is nothing from which we can deduce it as an inference. It is born in us, and we cannot choose but think it. We act unconsciously as if we were infinite. Infinity is the mainspring of all human development. At the same time it is the source of a healthy pessimism, which acts as a check on a narrow and superficial optimism, and which lies at the root of all progress. Nothing satisfies us really and permanently except striving after the infinite, even though we are perfectly aware that, during our earthly existence at least, it is beyond our reach. We are cramped by the fetters imposed on us; we regard as unnatural the limits against which we fret. Our spirits therefore revel in a magical world, with the fantastic delineation of which the romancers ever delight children, both small and great. Hence it is that we dream of a beautiful past when everything was as yet perfect, and when mortal happiness was undisturbed. Hence we long for a future age when all tears will be wiped away, and all toil will have an end; for "hope springs eternal in the human breast," in spite of all experience, and has hitherto proved ineradicable. In our best moments we feel superior to the world of phenomena around us; we feel the superiority of our spirits to the blind powers of nature which can crush us; we feel that we are not merely of

the earth, earthy, that we are not merely dust which to dust must return, and that man and mortal are far from being simply convertible terms. Translated into the form of religious conception, this consciousness of the infinite within us is that sentiment of kinship with the superhuman power which the religious soul postulates. But then come our daily experiences with their terrible reality. Everything around us passes away. Death snatches away our dearest ones from our side, and we ourselves sometimes feel the chill touch of its hand. Our most excellent plans, so well considered, so carefully prepared, are constantly thwarted. We desire to investigate, to know, and to understand, but we continually stumble against riddles which we are powerless to solve, and we perceive that we only "know in part." Then it is that we feel the limitation of our powers, our littleness, our nothingness. But, as we cannot rest content with our condition, we seek support for our weakness in more highly gifted persons, in the mighty spirits who "endure as seeing Him who is invisible," in saints "whose conversation [or rather, citizenship] is in heaven," in inspired prophets whose witness strengthens us, and above all in the contemplation of the image of that One in whom the purely human element coincides with the all-conquering divine love.

Lastly, this experience of our weakness and impotence is equivalent, in the ethical domain, to that consciousness of guilt which gives rise to our need of

redemption. As I have already said more than once, the idea of redemption, which has sometimes been erroneously supposed to be limited to the most highly developed religions, is absolutely general, although the form in which it is conceived is at first very simple and imperfect. The image is borrowed from that of captivity. Redemption is release, not merely, as it is usually understood, from the power of sin, and still less from its consequences and penalties only, but from all the bonds of finiteness, from everything that hampers man in the full development of his spiritual life. Such is the Brahmanic Moksha, which is a release from all worldly hindrances; and a still more striking example is the Buddhistic Nirvâṇa, in which all desire, all pleasure, even a man's very personality, are extinguished. The Christian conceptions, which sometimes differ very widely, are more temperate, and chiefly lay stress on reconciliation with God. But, here, as in other ethical religions, the power to release and the power to reconcile are concretely combined in the person of the Mediator, who was born of God and yet was man, just as in the old nature-religions the demi-gods were Saviours and Liberators. And the origin of this need of redemption or release, the feeling that prompts man to seek salvation from his Redeemer, is none other than his sentiment of kinship with God, which has come into collision with the sad experiences of his moral battle of

life. Even his highest aspirations have so often ended in disappointment. What he, his higher *ego*, would, he has left undone, and what he would not, that he has done. Akin to God, yet he has proved untrue to his origin. Though he ought to be superior, he feels his inferiority to a power that is really beneath him, and whose service degrades him. And then, whatever be the conception he forms of it, whether he is still in bondage to a belief in certain magic influences, or whether he be aware that it is the spectacle of moral grandeur that restores him to himself, the image of the man that was one with God revives in him a consciousness of his kinship with God, and enables him to be reconciled both with himself and with his God.

I have endeavoured to account for the conception in which religious faith culminates, the concrete image in which the union of the divine and the human is discerned, as arising out of the needs of the religious soul. We have established the presence of two root-ideas in all conceptions of faith. On a closer examination, which our time does not now permit, we might perhaps discover that the two are essentially one. No form, however beautiful, however exalted, is abiding; for no form can adequately express what is infinite and ineffable. Who does not feel that, as "we know in part," so we can only "prophesy in part"? Yet forms are necessary; and no form ought to be discarded until some other is discovered which expresses more correctly and

adequately the truth of which it is the figure. The *Credo quia absurdum est* of Tertullian, if taken in a literal sense, would be an unwarrantable and therefore an inadmissible paradox. That an ephemeral being like man should imagine that he participates in the Infinite, is, judged by materialistic or sober rationalistic standards, the most absurd thing in the world. Yet this belief is one of the chief corner-stones of religion, and it perfectly justifies the pious believer in declaring that what seems foolishness to the world may be wisdom with God.

LECTURE VI.

WORSHIP, PRAYERS, AND OFFERINGS.

A SENTIMENT of kinship with the superhuman powers, as well as a sense of entire dependence upon them, impels the religious man to seek communion with them, or at least to enter into some kind of relation towards them, and to re-establish such communion when he thinks it has been broken off through his own fault. From this impulse spring all those religious observances which are usually embraced in the term worship. Not, however, that worship is the only badge of religious sentiment. If this sentiment is sincere and fervent, it manifests itself throughout the whole of a man's conduct, and exerts a decisive influence on his whole moral life. It is not, however, of this influence that we are now speaking. I merely mention it in order to show that I do not overlook so important a fruit of religion, and we shall return to the subject afterwards. For the present we are solely occupied with the observances more immediately con-

nected with religion—observances which are but little cultivated or even entirely neglected by some, and are regarded as the chief and vital characteristic of religion by others.

Let us at once proceed to examine these two different views. Each represents a truth carried to one-sided exaggeration. Worship is certainly not the chief thing in religion. There may indeed be some who, on various grounds, abstain from taking part in public worship, but who are yet deeply religious, and whose whole life is governed by religious principles—more so perhaps than the lives of those good people who hardly ever miss a single religious service. But, as a general rule, men long to give utterance to the sentiments of which their hearts are full; for the being they revere they will show their reverence in words and in acts of homage; for the object of their affection they will show their love by striving to be near it; and so, too, the worshipper longs to possess and to give himself wholly and utterly to the being he worships. Worship is not, however, a proof of religion unless genuine; it may be a mere spurious imitation. On the other hand, if a man abstains from all public worship, it is a proof that in his case this religious need is in a dormant state, if it exists at all. Although I should hesitate to agree with Rauwenhoff when he says that "religion is nothing unless it is also worship," I am convinced that our religion lacks something, and that it is not in

a healthy condition, if it feels no need of manifesting itself also in worship. No one, therefore, who proposes to investigate the nature of religion should fail to study those observances which form its immediate reflection.

One must not, however, confine oneself to a single form, but must pass all forms in review. A whole theory is too often built upon observations relating to a single series of phenomena, and is then supposed to account for the origin and significance of worship in general, and perhaps even for religion itself. It is also a common mistake to pay exclusive attention to public religious observances, as if they were the only ones. Pfleiderer defines religious cult as "an utterance or manifestation (Bethätigung) of the religious consciousness by means of the representative observances of the congregation, whereby its aspiration for communion with the divine attains actual consummation."[1] But, however true the second part of his definition may be, he forgets that worship was practised long before any regular congregations existed, and that the religious rites observed by the father in the midst of his family, and even by individuals in perfect solitude, must be included in the term worship.

The late W. Robertson Smith, in his last work, the second edition of which he himself prepared for the press with his dying hand,[2] maintains that the type of

[1] Religionsphilosophie, 2nd ed., ii. 534.

[2] Lectures on the Religion of the Semites; 1st series, The Fund-

religion based upon racial kinship, such as where the deity and his worshippers form a community cemented by ties of blood, was, among the Semites at least, the original form of religion. No family religion could exist at the outset, because there was no family as yet. Even the individual possessed religion only in so far as he was a member of the tribe. The author also believes that kinship alone formed the basis of religious and national union. But, in spite of the immense learning he exhibits, and the wealth of strong evidence and cogent arguments he submits, he has not succeeded in convincing me of the soundness of his theory. At the same time it contains a large amount of truth. With great acumen and justice, he points out that the sentiment of kinship with the gods has been one of the most potent factors in the genesis of religion, and that such a form of veneration of the gods as he describes was the original form of public worship. One kind of religious observance, the only kind he expressly treats of, and the one which he supposes to have been the earliest of all, is that of common sacrificial repasts, which his theory accounts for better than any other. For this he deserves great credit. But I do not think we are justified in applying this theory to all other forms of worship, or simply to pronounce those which are inconsistent with it to be mere modern innovations.

amental Institution; revised edition, London, A. & C. Black, 1894; *pass.*, and particularly p. 50 *seq.*

Be that as it may, and whatever may have been the oldest form or the origin of worship, we know many forms of it whose existence has been, or still is, justifiable, and which are but various different attempts to satisfy the needs of religious sentiment. Impossible as it would be to refute a work like Robertson Smith's, in so far as we differ from it, except by a similar work based upon long and extensive research, and impossible as it is, within our present limits, to describe all these forms, or even the most important of them, yet we must endeavour to enumerate and classify the chief types.

It has been remarked (by Rauwenhoff and Pfleiderer), and to a certain extent justly, that all worship is of a twofold character. Man approaches his God, and God approaches man. The worshipper invokes the superhuman powers, and they answer him. In the narrative of Elijah's contest with the priests of Ba'al on Mount Carmel, one of the grandest creations of religious poetry, the proof that the worship of Yahve in Israel is the only true worship consists in the fact that, however loudly the priests of Ba'al might shout, however much they might lament and torture themselves, "there was no voice, nor any that answered," whereas the prophet of Yahve had scarcely uttered his prayer before he was answered by the Holy One of Israel with fire from heaven. The pious worshipper is active when he prays and presents his offerings, and passive when

he hears the voice of his god; and these two conditions are in close union on the occasion of sacrificial repasts and festivals, when the deity himself vouchsafes to take part in them and to dwell among his faithful servants. And the same idea is expressed in the beautiful symbolic language of the Book of Revelation (iii. 20): "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." In short, if worship is to be something more than mere outward show, the believer must not only feel the need of pouring out his heart, but must be thoroughly convinced that he does not seek his God in vain, that his prayers will be heard, that his offerings will be accepted, and that, though he hears no audible voice nor sees any visible sign, God will reveal Himself to his soul. This double or reciprocal character of religion must not, however, be construed too literally or in a mere mechanical sense. For it is not as if one phase of it emanated from God, and the other from man. It must, as a whole, emanate from God and from man at one and the same time. The early Christians always spoke of the "word of God and prayer" as two distinct things; and in fact all public Christian worship still consists of a combination of these. Yet a profound religious truth is contained in the answer said to have been given, under divine inspiration, by the Persian mystic Jelál-ed-Dîn Rûmî, to a pious inquirer. He

complains that his prayers to Allah remain unanswered, and he had been persuaded by Satan that they were all in vain. "But why," asks the prophet, "have you ceased to call upon God?" "Because," replied the doubter, "the answer, 'Here am I,' never came, and I feared to be turned away from the door." Whereupon the prophet says: "Thus has God commanded me: Go to him, and say, 'O sorely tried man, was it not I that urged you to serve Me? . . . Your invocation of Allah was My 'Here am I,' and your pain, your longing, your zeal, were My messengers."

The most general, the most constant, and therefore the most important element in worship is Prayer. A cult may be destitute of sacrificial ceremonies or of outward observances of any kind, but no cult is possible or conceivable without prayer. If the voice of prayer is dumb, religion itself is extinct. Whether it be a spontaneous entreaty welling up from the inmost soul, or the repetition of a formal supplication, whether it be expressed in untutored language or in the form of a hymn of praise, sung by a single worshipper or by many together, whether it be a loud invocation, or a low murmur, or even a silent thought, prayer must ever be the most natural utterance of religious persons who seek communion with the deity, who ask for his support and succour, and who desire to make their wants known to him. Nor do we know of any religion, however undeveloped, in which prayer does not occur.

The primitive man addresses his god in the same way as he addresses the spirits of his deceased relatives, or his living friends, or the earthly powers from which he has anything to hope or to fear. We are told that when Prince Maximilian of Wied was in North America he heard the Mandans repeat the pleasing legend that "the first man had promised to assist them whenever they should be in distress, and had then removed to the Far West." (It need hardly be said that this first man, the progenitor of the human race, is none other that the god of the sun.) "When enemies attacked them," the legend proceeded, "one of them proposed to send a bird after their protector to invoke his aid. But no bird could fly so far. Another thought that perhaps a glance of the eye might penetrate to his presence, but the hills of the prairie prevented this. Then spoke a third: 'Thoughts are the surest means of reaching him.' Whereupon he prostrated himself, wrapped himself up in his buffalo-skin, and said: 'I think — I have thought — I return.' And then he arose, bathed in sweat. And the expected succour came."[1] The idea of such a purely spiritual intercourse, of addressing, and being heard by, an invisible being, who is believed to be a long way off, does not strike the unsophisticated believer as anything strange. For the beings he invokes are superhuman beings, exempt from the limitations of this earthly life.

[1] See Waitz, Anthropologie der Naturvölker, iii. 206.

But am I thus representing the origin of prayer as too simple a matter? Was not prayer, according to a well-known theory, a very different thing originally from what it is with us; was it not rather a magic rite whereby the gods or spirits were exorcised and subjected to the human will? We are here confronted with a most important and difficult question, which concerns worship as a whole, but has special reference to prayer, and which we had therefore better discuss now. I mean the question whether magic rites, sorcery, and enchantment are original elements in worship or are merely incidental to it: whether intercourse with the superhuman powers began with such rites, or whether they are to be regarded as morbid phenomena which made their appearance at a subsequent period. Those who concur in the well-known saying of Statius, "*primus in orbe timor fecit deos*," will take the former view, and will hold, with Renan, that religion began with man's endeavours to propitiate the hostile powers by which he fancied himself surrounded. I must confess, however, that prolonged research and reflection have more and more convinced me of the inaccuracy of that view. I would far rather indorse the words of Robertson Smith to the effect that, "From the earliest times, religion, distinct from magic and sorcery, addresses itself to kindred and friendly beings, who may indeed be angry with their people for a time,

but are always placable except to the enemies of their worshippers or to renegade members of the community. It is not with a vague fear of unknown powers, but with a loving reverence for known gods who are knit to their worshippers by strong bonds of kinship, that religion in the only true sense of the word begins."[1] For the present, we pass over the question as to the origin of religion; but we agree that worship, even in its most primitive form, always contains an element of veneration. Prayer, at all events, however far removed in its inception from the entire surrender of the will implied in "Thy will be done," can never have arisen from magic rites intended to coerce the deity. Men do not gather grapes of thistles. Superstition cannot be the mother of religion.

Let us at once admit what is undeniable. In the history of cults, sorcery always occupies a prominent place. It is true that magical power has often been ascribed to ancient forms of prayer, now more or less unintelligible, and degraded to a senseless jingle, to monotonous litanies, songs of praise, and sacrificial hymns, whether they possessed any literary value, or were pervaded by a lofty religious tone, or were destitute of both, and also to ritual observances whose object and meaning have long since fallen into oblivion; and that such power has been thought

[1] Religion of the Semites, 2nd ed., pp. 54, 55.

effectual, not merely to exorcise evil spirits and to repel enemies, but even to coerce the high gods themselves. And in such cases neither the meaning of the words, nor the views they expressed, nor the religious emotions they might awaken, were of the slightest moment, for everything depended solely on the frequent and absolutely correct repetition of every word and sound, in strict accordance with traditional rhythm. A phrase, a name, a symbol, or even a gesture, made the devils tremble and the good spirits fly to the aid of the faithful. Of this superstition thousands of instances are to be found, not only in all the nature-religions, but in some of the more highly developed religions also. They even occur in some of the ethical religions, such as the Brahmanic and the Zarathushtrian; nor are they altogether absent from some of our own Christian churches.

Are we, then, to regard such practices as being original, and the more rational conceptions as being derivatives from them? Surely not. Consider, for example, the Vedic hymns. Many of them, no doubt, exhibiting but little poetic inspiration, were composed by priests with a view to give point to their sacrificial rites. But most of them, including the earliest, are spontaneous creations of poetic genius, destined perhaps by their authors to be sung at sacrificial ceremonies and thus to enhance their

solemnity, but certainly not to be used as magical incantations. It was reserved for later generations to ascribe to them such magical virtue; it was they who taught that they were of supernatural origin, and were indeed the very words of Brahmâ or Is'vara himself. My highly esteemed friend, the late Dr John Muir, who contributed so much, not only in Scotland, but far beyond the limits of his own country, to promote the study of Indian antiquity, has proved from the texts themselves that the authors of the Vedic hymns never made any such lofty claims.[1] The same may be said of the Gâthâs, the earliest hymns of the Avesta, to which the Pârsees also attribute such miraculous power, and which they even worship as a kind of divine beings, although their contents make it apparent that their authors, the prophets of salvation (*saoshyañt*), as they call themselves, merely intended them to aid in the promulgation of the new doctrine. The magical papyri of the Egyptians, on the other hand, while containing a number of truly noble songs of praise addressed to the high gods, and chiefly to the Sun-god, are full of other compositions of a very different kind, which were expressly designed by their authors to ward off evil spirits or noxious beasts, and even of spells and incantations which are absolute nonsense, consisting of a string of words destitute of meaning

[1] J. Muir, Original Sanskrit Texts, III., 2nd ed., p. 232 *seq.*

or borrowed from some foreign and unintelligible language.[1] But there is no difficulty in distinguishing between the works of the true poets, borrowed by the magician-priests for their own purposes, and the silly products of their own stupidity. An excellent example of this is afforded by that most sacred prayer of the Pârsees, the Ahuna-vairya, or Honover, which they regard as the most effectual spell to ward off the evil spirits, the Daêvas and Drujas — nay, even as the creative word of Ahura Mazda himself. This text is difficult to understand, as it has been handed down by ignorant persons, and in a very fragmentary condition. But part of the contents is sufficiently clear to convince us that originally it was not even a prayer—any more than most of the other oldest prayers of the Zarathushtrians were originally prayers — but a fragment of a lost Gâthâ. And, to cite one more example of a less abstruse and remote character, we may be quite certain that the Lord's Prayer was not originally intended to be used as a mere senseless incantation, as was practically done by mediæval Christendom.

I do not say that the magician's art is of recent origin. In Babylon and in Egypt, for instance, it is very ancient. But I am satisfied that, although

[1] See, *e.g.*, 'Le Papyrus magique Harris,' par F. Chabas, Châlon-sur-Saône, 1860 ; and the beautiful hymns to the Sun in the Book of the Dead, chap. xv.

it was probably associated with religion at an early period, it was of an entirely different character, and was not originally part and parcel of it. Magic is directed towards an unknown world of wonders, which is dreaded and regarded with abhorrence; religion turns with earnest longing towards an unknown wonder-world, to which indeed the believer looks up with awe, but upon which he builds his hopes. What, then, has brought about the connection between the religious and the magical elements in so many religions? This connection is not always of the same nature. It may be the result of a slackening of religious life and religious inspiration, which leads to the substitution of formalism for religion. But it is often the consequence of a too rapid spread of religion—I mean its diffusion among peoples, tribes, or classes which are not yet sufficiently advanced to be capable of understanding it. The ignorant and therefore superstitious multitude are very apt to regard what they do not understand as something mysterious, something invested with divine power, which they are as yet unable to distinguish from sorcery. And no less ignorant and superstitious sorcerer-priests use their spells in good faith and in honour of their gods, while designing impostors use them for the selfish end of gaining honour and profit for themselves. Thus it happens that prayers and texts, hymns, rites, and sacred in-

stitutions, which originated in genuine religious emotion, and were therefore apt, or even expressly designed, to awaken the like emotions in others, became objects of imbecile superstitious awe. And the less they are understood, the more awful do they seem; the older they are, the holier they are esteemed. And so they come to be repeated by rote as mere parrot-sounds, or imitated with senseless gesticulation, with the conviction that they will protect the believer against the Evil One and reconcile him with his God. This is unavoidable. Give what is holy and sublime to Herr Omnes, as Luther called the *profanum vulgus*, and that estimable person will be incapable of receiving it without dragging it down to his own level, thumbing it, so to speak, and rendering it hopelessly vulgar, so long at least as he retains the mastery.

Are we, then, to regard this alliance with sorcery as a degeneration of religion? Professor Max Müller has styled mythology "a disease of language." I believe it would be much more justifiable to call sorcery "a disease of religion." Some religions die of it, although it is a slow death. But there are others which recover from the malady. And others again, while ceasing to find pleasure in mere empty phrases and gestures, have learned, from the study of the real meaning of the traditional texts and observances, to regard them from a different point

of view, and to expect from them, not magical efficacy, but truly religious fruit.

And so, doubtless, prayer, to the consideration of which I return, must have also developed from a lower to a higher stage. There is an unsophisticated familiarity in the manner in which the primitive worshipper addresses his god. When he discharges his duties towards the higher powers, and offers them homage at set times, he believes that they are then bound to help him in return. "If I were you, and you I," says a Vedic poet, already quoted, to his god, "I should certainly give you what you wish." He imagines, like the beggar who runs after you in the street, that he will gain his end by dint of entreaty and importunity. Yet this is only a moral suasion, not a magical coercion; it always takes the form of a petition addressed by an inferior to a superior. As man's conceptions of God become nobler and loftier, so his prayers will become purer and worthier, until they attain their climax in the perfect submission implied in, "Not my will, but Thine be done!"

Lastly, we must distinguish between magic and mysticism. In religion a wholesome mysticism is justifiable; and worship in particular always involves a certain mystic element. For the worshipper communes with superhuman powers, and, when he has reached the spiritualistic stage of development, with supersensual

powers. An element of mystery is necessarily involved in such communion, and especially in the wonderful efficacy of earnest prayer in giving peace to the soul of the suppliant, and in strengthening his faith, even before the prayer is answered, or even when it remains unanswered. But this is a very different thing from an effect of magic. For religion ever exists in abiding veneration, while magic has usually been a mere passing aberration, from which religion as a whole, though not every particular form of it, has always in the course of its development at last emancipated itself.

In all religions we find sacrifices and offerings associated with prayer. Although they seem to have been abolished in some religions, and notably in the Christian, yet even in these they are still kept up as symbolic observances or in a purely ethical sense. In the case of Roman Catholicism the Mass is still a very definite and systematic sacrificial observance, being the daily repetition of the sacrifice offered by the God-man, of whose body and blood the faithful daily partake; while I need hardly remind you that the incense, the flowers and candles, and other offerings of the pious, belong to the same category. Indeed every Lord's Supper, even when the doctrine of transubstantiation is rejected, and when it is regarded as a purely symbolic observance, is really of a sacrificial character. And although believers are convinced that the service of God does not consist in offering Him gifts, at least not as a matter of compul-

sion, they are exhorted to present their bodies as "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God," which is described as their "reasonable service" (Rom. xii. 1). In this sense all religion, if it is to be anything more than mere outward show, must contain the element of sacrifice, of a repeated dedication of oneself to God, which in its highest stage coincides with the religious life, or at least maintains and animates it.

The moment we begin to speak of offerings and sacrifices we find ourselves confronted with several questions which it is not very easy to answer, and which have given rise to great differences of opinion. What was the earliest form of sacrifice, the bloody or the unbloody? Both Tylor and Robertson Smith, with whom Pfleiderer concurs, and others besides, are satisfied that sacrifice originally consisted in the slaying of victims. And such would doubtless be the case on the assumption that the earliest race of men were hunters and herdsmen, and not tillers of the soil, whose offerings to their gods would consist of the first-fruits of their fields, of flowers, and other produce. But we have also to reckon with ichthyophagous tribes, which have certainly not reached a high stage of civilisation, and with such primitive savages as the Root-diggers of California. How could such as these offer animals in sacrifice? Tylor and Robertson Smith part company here. While the former supposes that the earliest sacrifices were holocausts—that is, that the whole of the victim was

burned, and thus sent up as a gift to the heavenly ones —the latter is of opinion that holocausts were of comparatively recent date. And, further, how did sacrifices originally come to be offered at all? How did such observances arise? What was it that prompted men to practise them? The usual explanation is a very simple one. A sacrifice, whatever be its form, is a gift or tribute presented to the Deity in order to secure his favour or to avert his wrath, whether the worshippers regard it as necessary for his maintenance and support, or simply intend it as a token of their humility and reverence. Nowadays, however, this theory is rejected, especially by the anthropologists, as being too superficial. Those who maintain that the worship of the gods arose out of the veneration of deceased ancestors contend, of course, that the sacrificial repasts prepared for the latter were simply transferred from them to the higher spirits. Robertson Smith, on the other hand, has a notable theory of a totally different character, which has been cordially approved by some, and utterly repudiated by others. According to him, the sacrificial victim was originally the Totem, or sacred animal, in which dwelt the living god of the tribe, and who thus communicated his life to those who partook of the sacrificial meal. Thence, with some modification, would arise the common sacrificial meal of the whole tribe, and in which the god himself, as pertaining to the tribe, would participate. And thence,

as he argues, all other kinds of sacrifice would gradually be evolved.

These theories have been advanced and defended with such learning and ingenuity that it would be highly presumptuous to condemn them hastily. In order to refute even the last of them, one would require to write as large a volume as that in which they have been so persuasively set forth, a task which would demand a prolonged and many-sided investigation, and one to which my resources would be quite unequal. And after all, the result would probably be unsatisfactory. For Professor Smith treats solely of the worship of the Semites, and indeed solely of their sacrifices, and the original form they took in that family of peoples. No doubt he compares them with the observances of non-Semitic peoples, and in this domain also he exhibits extensive scholarship. And he conjectures that what he claims to have proved in the case of the Semites will, on closer investigation, prove applicable to other nations also. But such investigation would require so wide a preliminary study, and the co-operation of so many different experts, that it could only be undertaken after long and laborious preparation. Meanwhile, at all events, we know the direction in which it would have to be pursued. And, whatever view may be taken of the theories of Professor Smith, whose too early death we still deplore, his most able and important work has unquestionably paved the way for such an inquiry.

At the outset (and here I venture to indicate what, in my opinion, is the weak point in most of the theories mentioned), we ought not to confine ourselves to a single kind of offerings, namely, sacrificial meals, but should take every kind into account. If we assume (with Pfleiderer) that nine-tenths of religious offerings consist in articles of food and meals, we still have to explain the nature of the remaining tenth. And, besides, it may be doubted whether his estimate is a very accurate one. In the general term "offering" a great many different varieties are embraced, such as gifts presented (*oblatio*), or objects, places, temples, and persons dedicated to the deity (*consecratio*), or slain victims, whether connected with repasts or not (*sacrificium*)—nay, all that is offered in honour of the gods, to please or propitiate them, all possessions or pleasures renounced, every act of fasting and abstinence, every kind of self-denial or self-sacrifice which proceeds from religious motives (*devotio*). Nor let it be said that these last can only be called sacrifices in a figurative sense. For, as we have already remarked in a different connection, this last kind forms the culmination of all sacrifices; it is the offering *par excellence*, of which all the others are but lower forms, and, as it were, masks and foreshadowings; it is the only offering which is actually associated with worship, not as a mere symbol, but in spirit and in truth.

Now, we are not here so much concerned with the

question as to which of these forms is the oldest, or in what order they arose out of each other or succeeded each other—a question, doubtless, of the utmost importance in connection with the history of the development of religion—as with the question whether in all these varieties there is revealed one and the same religious need, which ever seeks new forms of expression, and which only finds complete satisfaction in the forms last mentioned. I do not of course suggest that all who take part in sacrificial observances, as handed down to them by tradition, or as practised by the society to which they belong, are actuated by the same heartfelt needs. For in this, as in all other actions, men's motives may differ very widely. And so, too, the various rites of worship may be performed from mere force of habit, or because they are considered seemly, and therefore must not be neglected, or because the worshippers wish to parade the munificence of their offerings, or hope to secure the blessing of God here or hereafter, or from I know not how many other motives. We do not inquire as to the by-ends or lower interests that sometimes prompt men to perform these rites, although such motives will necessarily exist, but solely as to the true and ultimate psychological origin of these rites. We seek to discover their root, deeply implanted in the human heart; we search, as I have repeatedly pointed out, for the essential and abiding element in all these changing forms. There can be no doubt as

to how we must answer the question. The root of these sacrificial observances consists in the yearning of the believer for abiding communion with that superhuman power whose operations compel him to recognise its existence as a postulate of his thinking faculty, of whose sublimity his imagination has formed a conception, to which he feels himself inwardly akin, and with which he strives, so far as humanly possible, more and more to assimilate himself. In a word, it is the longing of finite man, who feels that he is more than finite, that there is an infinity within him, to associate himself, and to become one, with the Infinity above him. The means he employs for this purpose will of course correspond with the more or less advanced development of his conceptions. If he regards the superhuman powers as being subject to material needs like himself, or at least as being analogous to earthly powers, to the princes and chiefs to whom he is subordinate, he will take care not to approach them with empty hands, but will offer them the best gifts at his disposal; and fearful lest he be found unworthy or impure when he enters into the presence of his God, he will prepare himself for it by means of fasting, self-denial, and all kinds of purifying ordinances. If he regards the gods as members of his tribe, just as he considers his deceased ancestors still to belong to it, or if he looks upon them as his leaders in war and his protectors in danger and distress, upon whom depends the welfare of his home,

his people, and his country, he will slay a victim in their honour, and will partake of it with them; like the Hindoos, he will strew the place of sacrifice for them with Kus'a-grass, or like the Romans, who imitated the Greeks in this observance, he will spread a banquet for them on the occasion of the *lectisternia*. If he aims at rivalling his gods to some extent in extraordinary power, he will, like the Red Indian, subject himself to the severest personal sacrifices, and will join one of those associations whose members voluntarily undergo intense bodily torture in order to harden themselves. When once his gods, or at all events the most and the chief of them, have become dwellers in heaven, he will then burn his sacrifice upon the altar, either in whole or in part, of whatever nature the offering may be, whether animal, man, or child, in order thus to make it "pass through the fire" to the deity. Whenever he fears that his communion with his gods has been broken off through his fault, and that they have turned away from him in wrath, he will redouble his sacrifices in order that they may serve as sin-offerings and atonements, and he will wound and maim himself, and even bathe himself in the blood of the victim, in token of his penitence. In particular, in order once for all to become a partaker in the divine life, he will drink of the cup of life, carefully prepared as an earthly imitation of the cup of immortality quaffed by the gods, the Soma or Haoma, or whatever other name the sacred

beverage may have, and he will not merely offer it to them, but will drink it with them. And not only with a view to honour them, but to ally himself the more closely with them, he will set apart a fixed place for the celebration of these sacrificial rites, and this place will thus come to be regarded as sacred ; and as he advances in civilisation and artistic taste, he will not rest satisfied with choosing a limited space on a hill-top, or a clearing in a wood, for this purpose, but will erect a grand and sumptuous temple in which the god himself may dwell in the midst of his people. If he still belongs to the animistic stage of religion, he will take care that the divine spirit finds within his temple a body to dwell in, either a living fetish, or one made with hands, an idol in the form either of a man or a beast; and with blunt familiarity he will often secure the idol with chains in order to prevent the god from escaping. What childish and ridiculous buffoonery according to our modern notions! Yet the motives by which it is prompted still exist. When believers have outgrown these puerilities—when they are satisfied that their god requires no gifts and needs no food, and that he does not dwell in temples made with hands, either on Gerizîm or even at Jerusalem, but that he dwells everywhere, both around them and in them — then, being men, they will still feel impelled to signify the nearness of their god by means of symbolical rites; they will fondly attach a certain sanctity to the places

where they are accustomed to seek communion with him, either in solitude or in the congregation, as if the breath of a higher life were wafted on them from thence; and they will invoke the aid of art, and deem no sacrifices too great, in order to embellish these sacred places and render them worthy of their destination. In its highest spontaneous manifestation, prompted by the impulse of adoring love, religious worship is admirably typified in Mary of Bethany. Even honest utilitarians shake their heads at such conduct as hers. Is not the money spent by such devotees utterly wasted, and had it not far better be given to the poor? But a wiser than they testifies that wheresoever the Gospel is preached, and the living religion of love is appreciated, "there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her."

If then religious worship, in its origin and essence, is a striving after union with God, and the worshipper's periodical escape from the turmoil of everyday life—with its petty cares and great sorrows, its strife and discord, its complete immersion in the material—in order that he may for a while breathe a higher and purer atmosphere, the science of religion must take account of every form of cult, however insignificant it may seem, and must endeavour to winnow from it the pure grain of religious principle. Those who renounce religion altogether, because they have become blind to the divine element within them, look down with super-

cilious contempt on all observances which in their opinion are superstitious. The scientific observer knows better; but let him beware of attempting to influence such prejudiced persons in favour of public worship by denying its true character, or perhaps by representing it as beneficial for the masses, who require to be attracted by outward and visible symbols, or as a means of keeping men in order, as a kind of religious school for adults. Nor is it sufficient to dwell upon the beauty and the sublimity of some religious rituals, and upon the æsthetic sentiment thus awakened, although the good fruit borne by divine worship partly consists in the religious emotions it is capable of evoking. Worship may be attractive, æsthetic, sublime, but it must be something more. It must be pervaded with a genuine and healthy mysticism, it must be inspired by belief, without which it is nothing. I may be æsthetically and even religiously affected by religious ceremonials which belong to a totally different form of religion from mine. I may be touched, and even feel edified, by the words — *Stabat mater dolorosa, iuxta crucem lachrymosa, dum pendebat filius,* although the poetry is indifferent and the Latin questionable, or by the—"Wenn ich einmal soll scheiden, so scheide nicht von mir" of Bach's Passion, in the St Matthew version, although I may be quite unable to subscribe to the creed of the period in which Bach lived. But if worship is to be something more than mere outward

show, it must proceed from faith, from a belief in the reality of a communion between man and his God, between the finite and the infinite. Or, if I may venture for a moment to clothe it in anthropomorphic garb, worship must be sustained by the belief that when poor mortals feebly grope and search for their Heavenly Father, He looks down upon His children with a smile of loving satisfaction, and that when they cry, "Allah, Allah! Yahve Elohim! My Lord and my God! Our Father which art in heaven," He will not leave their prayer unanswered or send them away without a blessing.

Let us reserve for a new chapter a few words on the subject of God's response to His worshippers.

LECTURE VII.

RELIGION AS A SOCIAL PHENOMENON—THE CHURCH.

In our last chapter we considered the phase of worship that consists in the prayers and offerings with which men approach their God. At the same time, however, we remarked that they do so in the confident belief that they will not seek that God in vain, inasmuch as He reveals Himself to them in many different ways. This belief finds expression in another phase of worship: in the oracles and portents in which the believer, with his imperfect knowledge of nature and mankind, imagines he reads or hears the will of the gods; in soothsaying, which observes the flight of birds or the appearance of the entrails of the victim, or casts lots, or watches the position of the stars and the play of the lightning-flash, or attempts by various other strange methods to fathom the mysteries of Providence; in the Thora, or doctrine, which was doubtless originally a mere collection of precepts regarding the proper manner of serving the deity, but which afterwards

embraced the moral law also; in the recitation and interpretation of documents which were believed to contain the veritable word of God; in the free prophecy of inspired speakers; and even in those dramatic representations, often associated with worship, which may be described in the phrase of Rauwenhoff (though wrongly applied by him to all worship) as "faith made visible," and in those symbolic observances which, on a higher plane of development, shadow forth man's belief in the nearness of God.

Were we to attempt to describe each of these forms of divine revelation, or subject them all to a psychological analysis, or sketch the history of their development, we should have more than ample material for a whole lecture. And the task would certainly be an interesting one. We should have to direct our attention to the persons who have been regarded as the interpreters of such revelations — sorcerers, soothsayers, augurs, *haruspices*, priests, prophets, saints— and we should thus be carried back to a discussion of the belief in mediators, of which we have already treated. This would, however, involve too serious a digression from the ontological inquiry to which this course of lectures is devoted.[1]

We are at present solely concerned to inquire what is

[1] An admirable survey of the development of ideas regarding "holy men" is given by O. Pfleiderer in his 'Religionsphilosophie auf geschichtlicher Grundlage,' 3rd ed., 1896, pp. 679-727.

essential and abiding in religion. It is of course absurd to say that the Infinite makes His will known by visible or audible signs, or that He reveals Himself in the rustling of trees or the flight of birds. For what primitive people have spelt out of these has been but the outcome of pious imagination and emotion, the result of their own thoughts or hopes or fears; just as the essential feature in the famous Delphic oracle consisted, not in the ravings of the Pythia, but in the interpretation, often sensible, ethical, and religious, which the prophets put upon them. And we are all well aware that, however far above us the most illustrious interpreters of divine revelation may be, however superior in wisdom and insight, in piety and saintliness, they are all but men of like fashion with ourselves, differing from us in capacity and talent, but not differing from us in nature. Yet it is certain that no communion of man with his God (such communion being, as we have seen, the essence of worship) is possible or conceivable, if all the aspirations of the pious soul, all its longings and entreaties for help, light, and support, are to end in the despairing cynicism of Heinrich Heine, "No one but a fool expects an answer"; if, in short, men were to give up seeking the face of their God in despair of getting a direct answer, although at the same time well aware that the voice of God is only to be heard within their own inmost soul or in the inspired words of others. And, in the second place, there is no

doubt that religious persons will always feel the need of typifying their belief in fellowship with the deity by means of some symbol or observance, corresponding as far as possible with their disposition and development. All forms are transitory, because mankind itself is never stationary; but a religion without forms is lost in indefiniteness. And, lastly, to create or to recast these forms, and to clothe the constant religious element in images adapted to the wants of the most advanced members of the existing generation, is the vocation of those who are not satisfied to be merely the guardians of a venerable tradition, and the learned interpreters of sacred texts, but who, as prophets themselves, bear witness in inspired language to what God has implanted in their hearts; and not merely as ministers of the cult, but also as free witnesses of the divine spirit, as poets by the grace of God, as religious thinkers, as leaders of religious life—in a word, as persons in whom, as Pfleiderer has finely expressed it, "we recognise and gratefully revere the radiation of divine light individualised in manifold ways, and the embodiment of divine life."

This naturally leads us to our subject of to-day—religion as a social phenomenon—or the church. I have already stated my interpretation of the word Church, and I desire to adhere to it. In the concrete sense, we understand the word to signify "all the more or less independent religious organisations which em-

brace a number of kindred communities, and in general, in the abstract, the whole domain of religion in so far as it manifests itself substantively in society."[1] We have also already inquired how these independent institutions have been developed out of small communities which contained the germs of the ethical religions, and which had sprung up within the pale of those religions of the tribe or the folk where state and church, as yet undistinguished, were so closely united that membership of the folk almost necessarily involved veneration of its gods and observance of its traditional rites. We have likewise answered the question how far the church, which is sometimes regarded as the chief obstacle to the progress of religion, is really a most potent factor in its development, and under what circumstances on the other hand it may become a hindrance to that development. We need not now revert to these matters. Nor can we enter upon further questions, however interesting, which fall beyond our present scope. We cannot, for instance, stop to inquire into the relative merits of the various churches and sects, or attempt to decide which of them is most conducive to the advancement of religion in society. Is, for example, the cause of religion best served by a mighty organisation like the Roman Catholic Church, which inspires awe, and with which even the temporal powers have to reckon, while they have no difficulty in vindicating

[1] See vol. i. p. 138, and for the whole discussion pp. 136-146.

their supremacy over the numerous rent and riven Protestant Churches and parties? Or does not the leaden weight of such a hierarchy crush out living religion, and does not so inexorable a discipline make her feared rather than loved? Nor can we here treat of the difficult problem of the proper relation between church and state, except in so far as it concerns the vital question we shall have to answer presently. Such questions as these, I admit, are neither purely historical nor purely practical, for they have their theoretical phases also, and in that respect may be said to belong to the department of philosophy; but they belong rather to the philosophical doctrine of religion, and therefore find their proper place in the dogmatic teaching of the various churches. And although the inquirer may have strong convictions on these subjects, as I myself have on the last-mentioned of them, they are not strictly pertinent to the science of religion.

Let us therefore keep in view the object of the ontological investigation in which we are now engaged. We are now in quest of that constant and permanent principle which underlies ever-changing forms, which is essential to religious life under all possible circumstances, and which is a fundamental of that life in its normal condition. We are not now concerned to ask if the church is conducive or prejudicial to religion—a question we have to some extent answered already. Though we are convinced that, while the faults and

failings of the church's champions have injured religion, she herself has promoted it, yet the same may be said of the older forms of religious communities which she has superseded, but which were nevertheless in their day the indispensable and only possible organisations for the maintenance of religion. For what is useful at any given period may become superfluous in a period of higher development. Nor do we inquire whether the existing churches conform to the plane of development which religion has now reached. For the answer would require to be, "If not, try to purify and reform them, so as to bring them into accord with the higher needs of the day." Or may not the question rather be put thus: "Has the organisation of religion in its most recent form—that is, the self-dependent church—attained to such a pinnacle of development as to entitle us to say that an ethical religion, as a condition of its existence, must always be necessarily embodied in a church?" For we have already pointed to the possibility of a higher form of religion being developed out of the ethical; and who would venture to predict the nature of the embodiment it might assume? No one, however, can doubt that religious persons of like views and sentiments will always cling together, as man's social propensity prompts him to associate with kindred spirits; but such small cliques or societies, leagues or communities, are not churches in our sense of the word. The question our science has to ask is

rather this: "Does religion, in its own nature, and with a view to its perfect evolution, require so mighty a mechanism, so elaborate an association as the church, even were its forms and ordinances to assume a totally different character from those of the present day?" And when I say that our science must at least search for an answer, this of course does not imply that I claim to have yet discovered it. Or rather, let me state plainly that I have an answer, but that I shall state it as a mere hypothesis, the result of study and reflection, which will, however, require to be further tested by facts, and to be compared with the result of other scientific researches, before it can claim to rank as an established theory. In short, all I can hope to do is to offer a humble contribution towards the solution of this intricate problem.

Two of the possible answers may be at once rejected. First, that of those who regard religion as a mere passing phenomenon, or as a phase in human development. They will probably say that the existence of a church is an indispensable condition of the existence of a religion, but that the churches will inevitably die out with religion. Secondly, the answer of those who, whether they distinguish between religion and church, or consider them absolutely identical, fondly regard their own church as the only true church, and the only way to salvation, and as a divine and therefore eternal institution, destined some day to supersede all

others and to embrace the whole of humanity. Well, we shall not quarrel with them. What they expect is not in itself impossible, although it is not very probable, and although some of the very churches that indulge in this aspiration seem to be losing power and influence instead of making conquests and gaining ground. Yet no scientific research, no conclusive demonstration, avails in the slightest degree to shake their firm conviction. There is indeed an undeniable grandeur and sublimity in this creation of faith. A church sprung from the blood of so many martyrs, reared amidst humiliations and persecutions, ever fighting and struggling, yet ever extending her sway among the nations, a church militant on earth, a church triumphant in heaven, and destined to triumph at last in this world also—this is truly a bold and impressive conception. The only objection to it is, that the conception is bound up with a specific form of church, and that perpetuity and imperishableness are ascribed to what is really a transitory, perishable, mortal body, although that body is of a moral and not of a physical kind. Let me remind you of the profound saying of Goethe that "everything transitory is but a similitude." No man of science would therefore venture to deny that this conception of a universal church, although erroneously bound up with mere outward human institutions, contains the germ of a great truth, and is the similitude of a well-founded expectation.

Some students of the philosophy of religion take a diametrically opposite view. They think that the church has had its day, and this opinion is even gaining ground among those who prize and uphold religion. Let us listen to what some of them say. "Agreement of views regarding the supersensual," says Rauwenhoff (p. 842 *seq.*), "does not of itself constitute a religious community. Such a community only arises when, in view of the supersensual power recognised by a number of people in common, a certain similarity of sentiment has been awakened in their emotional life, giving rise to the need of union, and forming a bond of brotherhood." Thus far I agree with him, except that I would substitute the word "superhuman" for "supersensual." But on the next page he continues: "When we now ask in what form of religious body the requisites mentioned can best be realised, I would answer—in that of the independent community. This must always be a local community, which may indeed enter into a certain administrative alliance with similar communities established elsewhere, but must possess entire independence of life and organisation. Such is certainly the truest and most natural realisation of the idea of a religious community." And in a similar sense Pfleiderer (p. 745 *seq.*) is of opinion that a common religious life finds its natural, if not its only true, home in local church organisations. In the early days of Christianity, as he contends, such local organisations

were the only manifestations ("Erscheinungen") of the spiritual church. "They will always be indispensable. On the other hand, the permanence of their coalition into large organisms, like our various modern denominations, however inevitable in the meanwhile, cannot be inferred either from the nature of the church or from that of religion itself. The confessions which derive their names from Luther or Calvin or the Pope are, according to the evangelical or Biblical conception of the church, mere schisms, mere degenerate deviations from the true nature of the church, and possess no ideal right of existence." I must, however, beg to differ from both of these thinkers, and I do so from strong conviction. There is no church, according to them, except the one ideal spiritual church, which, however, has no real existence. In this they agree; for the administrative bond, which Rauwenhoff admits to be a possible bond of union between similar local communities, does not constitute a church. The true and proper realisation of their ideal church is to be found in the local communities. Such was the state of matters at the beginning of the Christian period, and to that state we must return. That is to say, that the religious development of some twenty centuries is to be regarded as a huge aberration, that we must wipe it all out, and begin afresh at the beginning. This is surely not the teaching of the philosophy of history, but rather a flat denial of its plain lessons. And this opinion is all the

more surprising in a scholar like Pfleiderer, who in the immediately preceding pages of the same work gives us so clear and admirable an historical survey. The churches that have been formed by the union of local communities have assuredly not all been ideal. Even their noblest representatives, while continuing to serve and vindicate them, will be the first to admit that they are but imperfect realisations of the ideals cherished by their founders. Yet they are not on that account mere unholy aberrations. They have rather been earnest attempts to realise the ideal church, which after all is only a conception, in accordance with the needs of different peoples in different periods. They are not mere creations of human caprice or ambition, but have emanated from the irresistible impulses of religious emotion, and therefore from the very essence of religion.

If it be said that they have ceased to satisfy the religious needs of the most advanced thinkers of the present day, and that it is impossible now to reform them in principle, be it so. That might at least be a matter for discussion. Or rather, since science can pronounce no opinion in the matter, let every one solve the question for himself. Some people may decline to try, excusing themselves "on religious grounds," like Schiller when he declined, *aus Religion*, to adhere to any definite religious confession. But those who really have any religion at all will always feel the

need of attaching themselves to persons of like sentiments and of equally advanced development, with a view to foster their religion by means of common religious observances. The associations thus formed will of course be small and purely local at first. But let it not be supposed that the matter can rest there. What has always happened in the past will happen again. These local associations will seek support from others, not because they require an administrative bond for their material maintenance, but because they are children of the same spirit, and feel that they are akin to each other. When they are convinced of the truth of the religious doctrine and of the soundness of its principles, they will proclaim it publicly by preaching and writing, and thus necessarily institute a propaganda. They will perhaps prefer to call their union of local communities a Brotherhood or a League, rather than a church; yet it will be a church all the same, although it may differ widely in principle and in organisation from all the churches hitherto known. It will be a church, a new church, and, let us hope, a more excellent realisation of the great ideal to which others have aspired, though without entire success.

History proves that this has always been the course of events, with those religions at any rate which have entirely outgrown the animistic stage. No ethical religion has ever been satisfied with founding a few isolated local communities, but all have striven, and

as a rule successfully, for the promotion of some kind of general union. At first it is usually the state, or rather the sovereign, that promotes this union, but it is not a union based solely on the unity of the state. A priesthood of more or less hierarchical organisation, a sacred Scripture recognised as a divine revelation, and sometimes even a creed imposed on all believers; but, above all, obedience to the same commandments, observance of the same rites, celebration of the same festivals, and adherence to the same principles — all this raises such a community above the position of a mere agglomeration of like-minded, yet entirely independent associations, and exalts it to the rank of a substantive church. In treating of this question people are too apt to limit their horizon to their own religion, as if the churches of Rome, or England, or Geneva, were the only churches in existence. In order to generalise with any certainty, we require to study the origins, principles, and character of other churches than the Christian. For a great deal more is expected of the science of religion than of the Christian, the Judaic, or any other system of theology. Although we cannot at present enter upon so comprehensive a study, or even state its results, I may at least indicate a few illustrations. Long before the Sâsânides, the founders and rulers of the Middle-Persian Empire, established the religion of Zarathushtra, after the year A.D. 226, as an organised state church, on the Jewish and

Christian models, the Avesta, the sacred Scriptures, had spoken of a visible sway of Ahura Mazda on earth, fighting against the powers of Deceit, a reflection of his perfect sway in heaven. To this system belonged a fixed creed, imposed on all, a recognised doctrine, an ordained priesthood, headed by the Zarathushtrotema, whose authority extended over all the eastern and north-western provinces, the holy city of Ragha being its centre, where the high priest alone, to the exclusion even of the sovereign of the land, reigned supreme. This was undoubtedly a church, whether different from, or a coalition with, the state church of the Achæmenides, that of Media and Persia, which appealed to the same Scriptures, but whose priests were exclusively *magi*, a tribe or class nowhere mentioned in the Avesta. And was not Judaism, afterwards followed on a grander scale by Islâm, a genuine church also? It was a church whose members were scattered all over the civilised world, and which had its local synagogues everywhere, while its centre was Jerusalem, where its revered high priest and the Sanhedrin held exclusive sway. In Buddhism we find another striking illustration. This was certainly not a church at first, nor even indeed a religion in the proper sense. In its origin it was simply an order of mendicant monks, similar to others which had sprung up within the pale of Brahmanism. But around the monks was soon gathered a body of lay brethren, who were not bound

to obey all the precepts of the order. As they rejected the Veda, which all Brahmans revered as the divine revelation, as they equalised all castes, and even persons who belonged to no recognised caste at all, and freely admitted all men to the blessed hope of salvation, they could not but be regarded as a heretical sect, and they were therefore compelled to set up an independent organisation of their own. And ere long they possessed all the characteristics of a church—church fathers, saints, and spiritual heads, and councils which laid down their discipline and doctrine in sacred writings of their own. The stories told of a great council held immediately after the Nirvâṇa of the Buddha, and of other councils besides, may be unhistorical; but it is certain that a council was held in the reign of King As'oka, towards the close of the third century before Christ, and that a list of the canonical scriptures was there drawn up by the king's command, as appears from a genuine inscription relating to that monarch. In the Sangha, or community, one of the three jewels as they are called, Buddhism possessed the germ of a church, a germ which did not fail to develop. Several Buddhistic churches were accordingly formed, the most important being probably that which has its headquarters in Ceylon, and another whose two sovereign pontiffs, the great Lamas, reside in Tibet. The hierarchy, customs, and institutions of the latter are, externally at least, so similar to those of the Roman Catholics, that the

pious Jesuit missionaries of Tibet declared that the devil had played them the abominable trick of caricaturing their holy Mother Church.

But perhaps some one will try to refute my contention by repeating the now somewhat exploded argument, that we have no right to assume that what has happened in the past will happen again in the future. No doubt we are exploring a province where we cannot predict any future event with absolute certainty, as the astronomer predicts eclipses of the sun or the moon; yet, while our expectations as to what will happen in the future can never be more than conjectures or hypotheses, they are not mere baseless fancies, but rest upon solid foundations. And if we cherish the belief that, wherever religious communities of kindred spirits have been formed, they will naturally grow into churches, our expectation is founded on our knowledge of human nature and of the essence of religion.

Concerning human nature I need not say much. I need of course hardly remind you of the familiar truth that man is a social being, yet it is a truth we must be careful not to overlook. The sense of weakness he feels in isolation impels him to seek support in others. And it is not merely his weakness in relation to the external world, but weakness as regards himself. If his thoughts and opinions find no response, he begins involuntarily to distrust their soundness and accuracy, and to ask whether he is not deceiving himself. And

more particularly when a new conviction has burst upon him, a conviction opposed to everything he has been taught and to all he hears from others, he feels the need of sympathy to strengthen and encourage him. He enters with fear and trembling upon the new path, and hesitates to enter it alone. Solitary great men indeed there are, understood by none of their contemporaries, outstanding above them all, who yet cling stedfastly to their sacred convictions, confident that "wisdom will be justified of her children"; but these are very rare apparitions in the history of humanity. All ordinary men require others to agree and co-operate with them. And thus there arise societies, leagues, parties, and sects in every domain of human life. And so, too, we find that small religious communities will look around them for kindred spirits to assist them in the promotion of objects which they could not attain unaided.

As individual men and small societies thus seek to gain encouragement in their ideals, and co-operation in their aims, from the sympathy and alliance of others, so every one who entertains a profound and living conviction will long to give it utterance. Convinced that no God is so great and mighty as theirs, or (as the more advanced express it) that salvation is only to be found in His service and in communion with Him, the adherents of most religions do their utmost to extend His sway. Even during the period of the nature-

religions, when folk and religion were inseparable, the chief aim, both of conquests and of the peaceful diffusion of any given form of civilisation, was usually to extend the dominions of the national religion and the national god. The wars waged by the Assyrians, for instance, were expressly declared to be wars of the god Assur, and the wars of the Israelites to be the wars of Yahve. Whenever the Assyrians conquered a new province, they introduced into it the worship of their god; and when they succeeded in capturing the gods of their enemies, they would only restore them to their worshippers after inscribing upon the images a declaration of the superiority and glory of their own god Assur. One of the lost Nasks of the Zend-Avesta of the Sâsânides, according to an extract given by the Dînkârd, lays it down that conquered enemies must not be spared unless they not only bow down before the King of kings and adopt the Iranian nationality, but declare their readiness to serve the sacred *yazatas* of the Zarathushtrian creed.[1] And so, too, Confucianism penetrated into Japan along with the Chinese civilisation; and Vishṇuism, S'ivaism, Buddhism, and a combination of the last two, found their way, partly into Further India, and partly into the Indian Archipelago, along with the Hindoo civilisation.

The higher ethical religions, especially those that

[1] Ganaba-sar-nijad, in Dînk., Bk. VIII., chap. xxvi. § 22, in West, 'Pahlavi Texts,' iv. p. 88 *seq.*

have shaken off their particularism in whole or in part, are not unaptly called by Professor Max Müller missionary religions. Pious missionaries go forth to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation to those who still walk in darkness and ignorance. Such were the emissaries of Pharisaic Judaism, and those of Buddhism, who were the first to set the example, and those of Christianity and of Islâm, although these two, the latter in particular, now and then used the argument of the sword. Every man who has a conviction, if only clear and intelligible, feels impelled to convince others. But the impulse is strongest when his religious convictions are concerned, as they are most deeply rooted in his heart and his inmost being. And the result is inevitable. Religion cannot possibly remain partitioned among little local societies, either independent of each other, or slenderly connected by some external tie; but these will gradually be merged in a greater community, which will be conscious of its unity in spite of all local differences. In its present stage of development at least, religion cannot live and progress within the narrow bounds of a small and isolated community, like an eagle cooped up in a cage. To bind it to this primitive form would be a retrograde step, just as it would be a reactionary measure to dissolve great states, and to hand over the whole task of civilisation to the care of independent civic communities. Such a step would be inconsistent with its

very nature. If, as we have said, man's sense of kinship with God is one of the foundations of religion, that sense naturally gives rise to a feeling of mutual fellowship among men, as being worshippers of the same God, and children of one Father. At the same time the differences among men in their views of life, and particularly their differences in development, will always, or for a long time at least, prevent either Christians or Buddhists from forming a single great church union, and from establishing some uniform mode of worship, even when they are satisfied that they all adore the self-same God. A plurality of religions will, therefore, doubtless, be the rule at first. But every new and original conception of religious life—that is, every essentially new religion other than a mere sect founded upon some subordinate difference in dogma or ritual, and other than the mere hallucination of some fanatic—will find itself compelled, with a view to its own maintenance and promotion, to objectivise itself in some kind of league of sympathisers, which, name it as you please, is simply what is commonly known as a church.

I have said that it is not our business to define the relations that ought to subsist between church and state. That question belongs to political rather than to religious science. Nor can it be solved by means of any theory of general application; for it partakes of a practical nature, depending upon historic conditions,

of which account must be taken. We certainly cannot concur with the estimable Richard Rothe, whose ideal conception of the state, according but little with reality, and in my opinion quite impracticable, has led him to advocate the absorption of the church by the state, while the state should in future be charged with the whole of the tasks hitherto incumbent on the church. This is going still further than the view recently propounded, that state and school should together take over from the church the whole guardianship of the moral life of the nation.[1] Now the state is precisely the least qualified body, and therefore the least entitled to superintend, to promote, and to regulate the religious life. One would rather intrust this duty to the school, to science, to the family, although even these could only partially fulfil it. What was possible on the naturistic plane — though even then the priesthood always enjoyed a certain independence—is impossible now that religion has attained its majority. An ethical religion requires to have a voice of its own, and is fully entitled to it. Whatever attitude the state thinks fit to take up towards the various churches, in so far as their external organisation is concerned, and however properly it may subject them to the laws of public order, it can no more assert

[1] J. Unold, Grundlegung für eine Moderne Practisch - Ethische Weltanschauung: Leipzig, 1896.

authority over religious life and thought than it can dictate the methods to be followed, or the results to be aimed at by science, or the rules and directions to be observed by art. There is a growing inclination nowadays to extend the state's sphere of action, and to impose upon it duties which for centuries past have been performed by individuals or by independent associations. Whether this is wise, or whether things will be done better under the new system than under the old, I will not venture to state my opinion. But I may at least express my strong conviction that the state will be ill-advised if it lays hand upon religion, or presumes to meddle with the internal affairs of the church. Among the Germanic peoples at least any such attempt would assuredly meet with overwhelming opposition. Let governments, therefore, beware of attempting to invade the sanctuary of man's spiritual life.

Conversely, as I need hardly remind you, the state, science and art, the school, and all other free human institutions, are equally entitled to oppose any direct interference in their affairs on the part of the church. They cannot, of course, escape from the influence of religion; and in so far as the church faithfully represents religion, they will experience its moral power. But let not the church, while anxiously defending her own interests, encroach upon the rights

of other bodies, or check the aspirations of the human mind. Let her beware, lest she make herself and her sacred cause hated, of attempting to obscure the light, to thwart progress, to rule where her sole mission is to serve, or to lay upon men any other yoke than that of Him who invited the weary and heavy-laden to come to him. Sovereign in her own domain, let her respect every other domain presided over by a different authority.

What, then, is her domain? What is the task imposed upon her in the present state of religious evolution, and in our modern society? Here we have a two-fold question, and we must now try to answer it.

Her domain is exclusively the religious. This sounds like a truism, a truth of which it is unnecessary to remind you. Yet few truths, while admitted in the abstract, are so constantly denied in the concrete. Most of the churches, and especially the most powerful, instead of confining themselves to their proper religious province, have interfered and domineered in almost every other province, little to the advantage of the latter, and certainly to their own disadvantage. This was, perhaps, unavoidable in certain periods of history, and was then, perhaps, a necessary evil. At the present day, however, such interference has become unnecessary, and indeed impossible. Peoples and sovereigns, philosophers and investigators, poets and

artists, and in short all civilised and enlightened persons, have now outgrown the old ecclesiastical tutelage. We shall certainly never return to Canossa. We no longer mutter the famous *Eppure si muove* of Galileo with bated breath, but we proclaim our convictions on the housetops, and it requires no courage to do so nowadays. We no longer bring the result of our researches with fear and trembling to the touchstone of church doctrine, ready to fling them to the winds if they fail to stand the test. This is fortunate for society, and it is fortunate for the church also. She can now be truly herself. She can give her undivided attention to her own mission, hitherto so often neglected for side-issues. She can now awaken the poor children of men, in their struggle for existence and their earnest quest for light, to a consciousness of their true destiny, of their kinship with God, and of the infinite within them. She can comfort the mourners, seek the lost, raise up them that fall, support the weak, and humble the proud. And by her preaching, symbols, and elevating ritual, and by the example of her ministers, she can ennoble men's hearts, and constrain them to look forward longingly to a salvation that passes not away, and to a peace that nothing can destroy. "A sower went forth to sow." What a beautiful emblem of the church's mission! For that is her mission, and that alone. She must preach, prophesy, and testify, by

word and symbol, of all that is highest in man, and against all that tends to his ruin. She must never forget that she is a purely spiritual institution, which can only attain its lofty aims by spiritual means. Let her beware of attempting, for the sake of fleeting popularity, or with a view to extend her external supremacy, to deprive rulers or statesmen, politicians or men of affairs, of any of those tasks for which they alone are qualified. Let her also beware of invoking the aid of state and police for the forcible accomplishment of objects which she ought to compass solely by peaceful argument. Above all, the church should be the last to doubt the power of the spirit, which surpasses that of all commandments and prohibitions, and which will at last be all-pervading, all-hallowing.

Such, then, are the church's peculiar functions, which neither pedagogue, nor moralist, nor benevolent society, however excellent, can possibly discharge. The churches alone stand for all that is purest and best in human nature, and they will, therefore, be necessary as long as the need of religion and of religious development is felt—as long, that is to say, as human beings continue human. And if they remain true to their vocation—each in its own way and according to its lights—they will cease to be feared and hated as rivals of other powers, and as

standing menaces to the independence of individuals and of society generally. They will be prized and esteemed, and their co-operation will often be invoked. They will then truly deserve a name which has hitherto been applicable to few of them —the name of a Mother who lovingly gathers her children around her, and is a blessing to all.

LECTURE VIII.

INQUIRY INTO THE BEING OR ESSENCE OF RELIGION.

PROFESSOR SIEBECK, in his thoughtful manual of the philosophy of religion,[1]—a most instructive work, even for those who cannot follow his method or always concur in his conclusions,—disputes the accuracy of the common antithesis of husk and kernel as applied to the external and the internal elements of religion respectively, particularly, because it implies that we have only to strip off the husk in order to get possession of the kernel. In other words, the doctrine, with the scriptures in which it is expounded, and divine worship are mere externals or husks, which are matters of minor importance, whilst the spirit or kernel is the essential thing. This view, as he contends, leads to error, and is contradicted by history. The true relation between the two may, as he admits, be destroyed; words and forms may lose their life, in which case religion becomes fossilised. And so, too, externals

[1] Lehrbuch der Religionsphilosophie, p. 263.

may grow so rankly as to choke the internal vitality. But this just seems to him to prove that the internal and the external, the abstract and the concrete, in religion are inseparably united. Or, as it may perhaps be better expressed, religion has a subjective and an objective side—namely, religiosity and religion—and it is only in the constant action and reaction of these two elements upon each other that the true nature of religion is fully revealed. And the same process, as Professor Siebeck points out, is observable in other departments of culture, particularly in that of art.

These observations are well founded, and they coincide with what we have learned from our preceding inquiry. The opinion combated by Siebeck, and one which is still generally entertained, is a survival of the old superficial rationalism, as well as of the no less superficial idealism, which failed to take account of history. We have seen that religious man has ever clothed his emotions, his thoughts, and his sentiments in conceptions and ideas, and has ever expressed them in observances and ceremonies. Out of the former grows a religious doctrine which, as civilisation advances, is committed to writing in the shape of sacred documents and creeds, while the latter gradually assume the form of organised worship. And for the maintenance of that doctrine and the practice of that worship, he allies himself with kindred spirits in communities of greater or less extent. Consciously or un-

consciously, he feels constrained to act thus; and if he did not, the emotions would pass away, the impressions would lack stability, the sentiments would prove to be but vague ebullitions, and his thoughts would fail to attain perfect clearness even in his own mind. This is therefore a phenomenon which must needs constantly recur.

Or, to adhere to the figurative language used by Siebeck himself, who can deny that the husk is just as necessary for the preservation of the fruit as the kernel is necessary in order to give the husk its value? Without the husk the kernel would be lost. If, for example, we rejoice in the blessings of that new religious life which dawned in Galilee, we must not overlook the fact that we owe these blessings to the formation of a community which carefully collected and preserved the earliest documents of the Gospel, and thus handed down to posterity the memory of the fervour and enthusiasm of that period; that we owe them to the development of the community into a church, so solidly founded and stoutly built as to defy the storms of the dark ages of barbarism; and that, when the church was found no longer to satisfy the religious needs of many, and to be a hindrance rather than a help to the sustenance of their spiritual life, we owe the same blessings to the establishment of other communities, differing in views and in organisation, but all agreeing in the conviction that the Scrip-

ture is the word of God—a conviction which led them not only to guard the purity of its text with anxious care, but to bestow the utmost pains on its study and interpretation. All these have been, in their time, necessary means for the preservation of what would otherwise have certainly been lost—but only in their time. Many people nowadays require these means no longer. The Roman Catholic Church still satisfies the religious wants of millions, and possesses many peculiar merits which are not to be found elsewhere, or not at least to the same extent. But for these, she could not continue to exist. Again, the doctrine of the divine inspiration of the Scriptures, in its old mechanical acceptation, is still, in the case of many people, the only means of making them appreciate the Bible. But there are millions who have ceased to regard the mediæval church as the guide of their religious life, who are nevertheless religious, and to whom we cannot deny the name of Christians. There are many persons also who can no longer subscribe to the old-church doctrine of the infallibility of the Scriptures, or who at least regard the divine inspiration of their authors as something totally different from a mere literal or mechanical agency; and yet there is abundant evidence to show that such persons by no means underrate the religious value of the Bible—nay, that, when released from the tyranny of its letter, they are the better enabled to penetrate into its spirit. In short,

the husks in which the priceless treasure has been preserved throughout the ages have themselves been indispensable, but they have had their day; and in the fulness of time, just when the spiritual fruit they protect begins to run the risk of being choked by them, they require to be removed and replaced by others. The husk is therefore invaluable, though only for the sake of the kernel. Our concern is now with the kernel. The kernel alone gives its value to the fruit, and alone affords us sustenance.

I therefore agree with Siebeck in holding that the external manifestations of religious consciousness are not mere unimportant incidents, and that their study should by no means be neglected. Above all, I consider it wrong to maintain that it does not matter what a man believes and teaches, or how he worships, provided only he believes something and worships in some fashion or other. But while I hold that the content of the doctrine and the forms of worship are by no means matters of indifference in religion, I can no more admit that they pertain to the essence of religion than I can regard my body as pertaining to the essence of my human nature, or suppose that the loss of one of my limbs or organs would really impair my personality or true humanity. It is one of the conditions of the life of religion that its internal elements should be reflected in its external, that the subjective should constantly be objectivised. It is indeed of the utmost

importance that the outward form should as faithfully as possible index the inward essence, and that the objective should agree as far as possible with the subjective—as far as possible, I say, because there are many cases in which images and symbols can only approximately express the thought that underlies them. Yet, for the very purpose of maintaining this agreement, they must constantly undergo change, because the subjective or inward essence is perpetually developing.

What is it, then, that we can characterise as the abiding, the unchanging, the essential element, as distinguished from the ever-varying phenomena in which it is revealed. "The spirit," every one will of course reply, or, perhaps, "the idea." But I cannot accept this answer without some further definition. The terms used in the so-called mental sciences are apt to be so uncertain and arbitrary that, as we are concerned with a question of fundamental importance, we are bound to determine the precise meaning we assign to them. The term "spirit," in particular, is apt to be the least definite of all. When we speak of spiritual kindred in the domain of religion, we denote persons of the same way of thinking, advocates of the same principles; yet we cannot deny that men of totally different views sometimes act more in accordance with the spirit of our principles than others who belong to our own party. We distinguish between the

spirit of Rome and that of Dordrecht or Geneva, between the spirit of the apostolic age and that of the middle ages; and we thus denote cardinal differences in principle and development within the bosom of one and the same family of religions. As a rule, we here use the word "spirit" to signify a certain sentiment or frame of mind, but we also include the idea of a direction both of thought and life. The word is, however, also applied in a general way to what may indeed develop, yet remains essentially the same, and retains the self-same individuality throughout all changes. In this sense it might be here employed; but, to prevent mistake, I prefer to use the word "being"—that which *is*, as distinguished from that which grows or *becomes*, the *οὐσία* as distinguished from the ever-changing *μορφαὶ*; and I have therefore called this part of our course the *ontological*, though it might perhaps have better been described as the *physiological*. At all events, our science cannot rest satisfied until it has extended its investigations to this point. The question as to what is the true being or essence of religion is a very difficult and complex one, and I cannot hope to offer an entirely satisfactory or final solution; but I may at least make a humble attempt. And, to begin with, let me emphasise this point, that we are not now speaking of the essence of religion in the metaphysical, but solely in the psychological sense. To treat of religion as something more

than a mere psychological problem does not indeed lie beyond the province of philosophy in the widest sense, but it certainly lies beyond that of our science.

The difficulty of answering this question is at once apparent from the fact that attempts have already been made to answer it in a great many different ways. Men whose knowledge of religious phenomena, of history, and of psychology merit our admiration, and even the profoundest thinkers, have arrived at widely divergent conclusions on this subject. Some seek for the essence of religion in creeds, and accordingly suppose that everything depends on their purity, and therefore on their orthodoxy. And when we observe how passionately men have wrangled, and still wrangle, over doctrines, how they condemn persons who differ from them as infidels, and how they flatter themselves that they alone possess a monopoly of religious truth and are God's elect, we see that such views are very generally prevalent, and that they are perhaps in practical life the commonest of all. Rejecting such views, others maintain that divine worship, the church, and the church's ordinances together constitute the essence of religion, and that the only object of dogma is to rally the faithful to a common standard, and to facilitate the religious education of their children. Now we have repeatedly stated that neither doctrines nor worship are matters of indifference, but are rather the necessary manifestations, and in a sense the true

tests, of religious life. We are convinced that religious men, as thinking beings, feel the need of possessing some conception of God and the divine, whether derived from others or thought out for themselves—a conception such as to satisfy their thinking faculty; and we are equally convinced that worship must utter itself in outward observances, because men's hearts impel them to do so. Zealous for truth, and longing for a sense of assurance and clearness of insight, they naturally translate into outward acts those feelings of which their hearts are full. But how can we discern the essence of religion in what is a mere index or utterance of man's inmost soul? (And let me remind you that even religious doctrine rests ultimately on emotion.) How can we discern the essence of religion in ever-varying conceptions and ideas, which are but an imperfect reflection of truths too deep for utterance? How are we to discover it in observances which, because never entirely satisfying the craving of the pious soul, are constantly being superseded by others? And, above all, how can we hope to discover it in such outward and imperfect institutions as our churches and their ordinances? As well might we attempt to discover in man's body the true essence of his humanity.

In order, therefore, to determine the true essence of religion, we must mount from the visible to the invisible, from the phenomena of external nature to the

source whence they spring. We need not seek for that essence, that abiding element, in religion as an anthropological phenomenon; for, as such, religion is subject to continual changes; but we must seek for it in the religiosity, or religious frame of mind, in which it has originated. Although in reality the two things are inseparable, we must try to distinguish between the ever-changing manifestations of religion and the sentiment which underlies them.

And hence we are concerned neither with doctrine, nor worship, nor church, but with that common root from which they all spring. And what root can this be but faith? Such was the view I formerly held in common with many others. And, indeed, without faith there can be no true and living religion. Excise faith from doctrine, and doctrine becomes an empty phrase, a lip-service, the parrot-like mumbling of a catechism, without the slightest idea of its meaning, and, in short, nothing but a wretched travesty of religion. Divorce faith from worship, and worship becomes mere senseless gesticulation, mummery like that of the Chaldæan impostors, a contemptible hypocrisy like that of the Italian priest who, as the story goes, upon the elevation of the host, exclaimed, to Luther's horror, "Bread thou art and bread shalt thou remain!" Sever faith from the church, and the church becomes an institution in which love of power, ambition, and covetousness reign supreme, and which grievously

abuses the most sacred heritage of mankind. Faith is the life of religion. Religion without it is dead.

Are we then, it will be asked, to seek for the essence of religion in faith? And there immediately arises the counter-question, Does this apply to religion alone? Surely it applies to our whole spiritual life. What is religion without faith? Yes—but what is our moral life without belief in the reality of goodness, in its power, and in the possibility of its realisation and its final triumph? True charity is said to believe all things. Can a man of science advance a single step in his researches without faith in the unity of nature, without belief in the possibility of discovering its laws, without belief in the truth? Who can be a genuine artist without belief in art and in his own artistic faculty? And, on the other hand, does there not even exist a belief in ghosts, in evil spirits, in witchcraft and exorcism, which, though we may regard it as superstition and a mere caricature of religion, is nevertheless as deeply rooted in some minds as religious faith in the souls of the pious? It is thus obvious that we cannot pronounce faith to be the specific characteristic of religion. Some other definition is therefore required.

Several different attempts have been made to find such a definition. The essential element we are in search of has been defined as a belief in the moral order of the world, involving the postulation of a supreme power which institutes such order, and which

causes it ultimately to triumph. (This is the doctrine of Bunsen, Rauwenhoff, and to some extent that of Kant also.) But this view depends upon the hypothesis that religion originates in ethics, and upon an identification of the moral with the religious principle, a view which we shall afterwards impugn.

I should be more inclined to agree with those who seek the source of religion in our experience of the fact that in every religion, albeit in countless different ways, a belief in God's supremacy over the world and mankind is combined with a belief in man's kinship with God. Here, therefore, we find a belief in God as the Infinite, the Illimitable, who is the perfect substance of all that is highest in our inward nature, though it be but finite and limited, combined with a belief in ourselves, as created in God's image, for the purpose of striving ceaselessly to attain to His perfection. Or, briefly, we here find a belief in the essential unity of what is specifically human with what is divine, a union which embraces both the different aspects of faith. Now, this faith is to be met with in religions on the lowest and on the highest plane of development. Yonder in crude animistic conceptions, myths, and symbols, especially in what is known as Totemism; here in the philosophical form of dogma. This faith has been embodied by the theology of the Christians in particular, in their dogmas of the Trinity and of the divinity of Christ, so that both the phases of our con-

ception of faith are united in the Son of God. And is it not precisely this dogma (for it is in truth but one) which throughout the ages has formed the mainspring of religion, and the profession of which has ever been regarded as the cognisance of all true Christians? And hence we might draw the conclusion that belief in the spiritual unity of God and man, combined with the fullest recognition of God's superiority to man—belief in the Infinite above us and the infinite within us—is the kernel of all religion.

This proposition undoubtedly contains much truth. It is a hypothesis; and it is justifiable as being founded on the preceding genetic-psychological inquiry. Yet this solution, which once satisfied me, does not, after prolonged study and maturer reflection, appear entirely adequate. What it lacks is the great desideratum of unity of principle. And, besides, it is too much of a dogma—nay, it is really a compound of two dogmas, or two distinct conceptions welded into a single doctrine.

Nearly the same remark applies to Siebeck's treatment of this question.[1] *More Germanico,* he sums up his exposition in a single formula, which, for the benefit of our non-German hearers and readers, we shall analyse a little. He regards religion as a conviction that God and a super-terrestrial world exist, and that redemption is possible—a conviction to which heart and mind alike contribute, and which is practically oper-

[1] Ibid., p. 442.

ative. And in the determination of religious consciousness, faith is the essential psychological moment. Faith, in this highest sense, he describes as an act performed by the freewill of the individual. This act consists, in the first place, in an affirmative answer being given by the believer, with regard to the idea of the Good, to the question whether the existence of a highest goodness and a highest worth should be admitted or denied —a question which, in view of the doubts begotten by experience and reflection, cannot be solved theoretically; but the act is, at the same time, a postulation of the super-terrestrial personality of God as the profoundest guarantee and the all-sufficient foundation of the continuous realisation of goodness. And the formation and elaboration of this conception spring essentially from the fact that the human personality, whatever essential and worthy elements it possesses in its own general nature, cannot fail to use them as keys or handles to the possibility of discerning the transcendental origin of the world. It seems to me, with all due appreciation of the truths thus enunciated, that the above statement amounts to little more than a dogmatism compressed into a formula, a sort of *extractum theologiae dogmaticae triplex!* Faith is indeed a free act of each human personality; and the statement is creditable to the discernment of the German philosopher. Yet I cannot acquiesce in holding that faith in a super-terrestrial deity, as being the foundation and guarantee

of the realisation of goodness, is to be regarded as the abiding characteristic of all religion. At all events, this is just another conception (a term which the author himself uses), and a very complex conception too. But a conception, even when a central one, from which all others diverge, and to which all others again converge, can never be the essence or kernel of religion. It may form the root-idea of a philosophical system, or of a philosophical religious doctrine; but doctrine, though a fruit of religion, is not religion itself. I also greatly doubt whether Siebeck's formula could be applied to religions in their earliest stages of development.

We must therefore try to find some other method of solving the problem. It is needless to search for the essence of religion in any outward phenomenon, either in doctrine, or in worship, or in church, or even in faith, which may doubtless be regarded as the source of one of its elements—that of religious thought. It must be sought for in a certain sentiment or disposition —in religiosity. Religion is essentially a frame of mind in which all its various elements have their source. Religion is piety, manifesting itself in word and deed, in conceptions and observances, in doctrine and in life. I once met an aged Roman Catholic priest who complained that his infirmities confined him to the house during the cold winter weather. "But how," I asked, "could he perform the service in his cold and draughty parish church?" "Oh, that is devotion," was

the reply. I loved and revered the old man for these simple words. For here, I said to myself, is a truly pious man, although our austere Calvinistic fathers would have branded him as an idolatrous votary of the Popish Mass. True to his sacerdotal vows, he felt bound to offer up the sacrifice which he deemed the holiest rite of his religion. Whether this might hasten his end he did not stop to consider—God knew. Surely this was religion, this was piety and devotion.

Now, I do not claim to have been the first to seek this method of solution. That religion is really piety is no new discovery. Others have already expressed their conviction of its truth. But most people stop here, as if this statement were sufficient to solve the whole problem, whereas in reality it is only the first step towards the solution. For, unless we would rest satisfied with using one term in place of another, we must further determine what piety really means. We need not trouble ourselves much about etymologies; for we must bear in mind that the German *fromm*, the Dutch *vroom*, and the Latin *pius* are no longer used in their original senses, but now possess a different and deeper significance. *Fromm* or *vroom* originally meant what is "useful, profitable, or salutary," and *pius* meant "dutiful or loyal." We have ceased to use the word "pious" in any of these senses. Piety is now practically synonymous with "devotion, or consecration," because it involves the idea of self-dedication and personal

sacrifice, which is one of the root-ideas of religion. But this is only one of these ideas. Piety involves more. The fact that the term is often used in a contemptuous or ironical sense need no more disturb us than the fact that its Teutonic equivalent originally implied a tinge of selfishness, while the Latin word might denote mere formalism. And therefore, when we say that religion is piety, we need hardly apprehend any risk of misunderstanding; we mean, as every one knows, that religion is, in truth, that pure and reverential disposition or frame of mind which we call piety.

Now, wherever I discover piety, as manifested in different stages of religious progress, and particularly as exhibited in full beauty in the highest stage as yet attained, I maintain that its essence, and therefore the essence of religion itself, is adoration. In adoration are united those two phases of religion which are termed by the schools "transcendent" and "immanent" respectively, or which, in religious language, represent the believer as "looking up to God as the Most High," and as "feeling himself akin to God as his Father." For adoration necessarily involves the elements of holy awe, humble reverence, grateful acknowledgment of every token of love, hopeful confidence, lowly self-abasement, a deep sense of one's own unworthiness and shortcomings, total self-abnegation, and unconditional consecration of one's whole life and

one's whole faculties. To adore is to love "with all one's heart and soul and mind and strength." To adore is to give oneself, with all that one has and holds dearest. But at the same time—and herein consists its other phase—adoration includes a desire to possess the adored object, to call it entirely one's own, and conversely a longing on the part of the adorer to feel that he belongs to the adored one for ever, in joy and in sorrow, in life and in death. He gives himself, in order to attain perfect union with the object of his adoration. He cannot feel happy except in the presence of that object. Although it is only in the lower stages of religious evolution that we find the worshipper placing himself wholly at the disposal of his god, in order, conversely, to gain control over that god; and although he displays the same selfish desire to secure a monopoly of the divine favour, and the same ignoble emulation, as characterise earthly relations (a selfishness which is speedily dispelled by clearer moral insight and purer moral sentiment)—yet no pious man will ever rest satisfied until he can exclaim out of the fulness of his heart, "*My* Lord and *my* God!" Adoration therefore demands that closest communion, that perfect union, which forms the characteristic aim of all religion, and to which all true believers earnestly aspire.

And, further, the spirit of adoration affords a key to all the various manifestations of religion. Who can adore without being so filled with the adored object

that it constantly occupies his thoughts, and that, albeit the object is the Infinite and Invisible, he cannot refrain from forming a conception of it, an image to delight his eyes and his heart? Who does not strive to know the adored one better, so far as it is possible for poor finite man to know him? Who can adore, without his whole life being dominated by the adored object, without strenuously clinging to it, without being inspired by it, without longing to give vent to his feelings in enthusiastic songs and in acts of reverential love? Thus inspired, he rejoices to find kindred spirits willing to enter into a sacred league with him, and, when he meets with persons whose spiritual life still slumbers, he delights to awaken it, to convince them by word and example, and with his enthusiasm to kindle in their bosoms that sacred fire which burns so brightly within his own. Faith, in all its various manifestations, worship in all its forms, every church and sect; all the manifold phases of religious life, the longing of believers to seek communion with their God in solitude, their impulse to go forth into the world in order to confess Him in public and show forth His marvellous works; the depths of their self-abasement in presence of the Most High, their trembling approach to His footstool, or their proudest triumph over the earthly and the transitory; the humble prayer, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner"; the sufferer's piteous lament, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachtani"; the cry of anguish, "Out of the

depths I call unto Thee, O God," as well as the exultant, "Nothing shall separate me from God,"—all, all this lies enshrined in adoration.

Two further questions that arise here must not remain unanswered. The first is, "Does all this apply exclusively to religion? Can we call adoration its essence when it is the essence of idolatry also? We might reply that adoration may take a false course, and be directed towards unworthy objects, just as we may throw away our charity upon persons undeserving of it, without thereby impugning the truth that love is the fundamental law of our moral life. But we must go a little deeper into the matter.

We use the term adoration even in our intercourse with our fellow-men. The passionate love of the youth for the bride of his choice, the unbounded admiration of children for a distinguished father, the wife's fervent reverence for her husband's talents, so well expressed by the poet Chamisso in words which I may paraphrase thus:—

"To serve him, live for, and belong to him
Be my whole aim,
And give myself, and thus exalted be
By his proud fame."

All this, though rare in these days of male precocity and female emancipation, and though we may smile at it as sentimental nonsense, is comprised in the word adoration. And although such adoration may be less

intense and overmastering than religious adoration, it has a great many features in common with it, and is of the self-same nature. To the same category belongs also the worship of genius, hero-worship, which has been recommended by David Friedrich Strauss as a substitute for religion, and has been so eloquently extolled by Carlyle. Such, too, is the veneration of the saints, although, in theory, the Church carefully distinguishes between the veneration of saints and the worship of God. The difference, however, is in degree only, and not in kind. But is it not a kind of idolatry to offer to weak and sinful creatures the homage we owe to the Creator alone?

Surely such veneration of saints and heroes, and such fondly cherished memories, can never serve as a substitute for religion. To devote the highest love to what is only limited and finite is irreligious. But veneration does not necessarily or always imply such a maximum of love. And after all it is not the actual, imperfect, and finite men, as such, that are revered, but rather a creation of the imagination, an ideal objectivised in this or that personage, whether historical or legendary, or of our own acquaintance. Are we angry, or do we smile benevolently, when we hear fond relations singing the praises of a father, a son, or a husband, and basking in the sunshine of their fame, in which they fail to see the blemishes detected by your sober and critical eye? For my part, I would rather see a little enthusiasm,

warmth of feeling, and affection, whatever the object of it may be, than an entire want of generous admiration. And what is more, those minds which are susceptible of such impressions are likely to be much more alive to religious emotions than those cold natures which scoff at what they consider silly fanaticism.

Nay, I venture to go a step further. What is idolatry? I do not now use the word in its figurative sense, as applied, for example, to such idols as money or honour, art or science: the pursuit of such objects has really nothing in common with religious idolatry. I am only now using the word idolatry in its proper and original sense. And I would define it as religion under the influence of intellectual aberration. To some extent it is an entirely subjective idea. To you and to me an idol appears to be a different conception of the Deity from our own, and I may surely say a lower conception. The Hapi-bull of Memphis is an idol from our point of view, but the Egyptian mysticism regarded it as a symbol and pledge of the ever-reviving Ptah, the God of nature's undying power of reproduction. In the eyes of the great Swiss Reformers the adoration of the Virgin was a profane deification of the creature, whilst, in the view of the devout Catholic, Mary presented a marvellous combination of pure maidenhood and of suffering maternal love. St Paul regarded Diana of the Ephesians as an abominable idol, and rightly so, from his religious point of view; but, al-

though Demetrius and his fellows championed her worship solely from interested motives, there must have been many pious persons who honestly believed in her divinity, and feared lest disloyalty to the sacred traditions of their fathers would bring ruin upon their city. In the opinion of our Calvinist forefathers, intellectualists as they were, the Popish Mass, as already observed, was hateful idolatry, while the Catholics regard it as the daily renewal of the great sacrifice of the Son of God. I venture to say that in all this there is religion, although on a lower plane of development, and that this religion only becomes idolatry when the conception of the deity upon which it rests ceases to satisfy our moral sentiment or our religious needs, and when we have advanced so far in religious evolution as to perceive that the adored object has ceased to be adorable.

Here again arises a second question. If adoration is the essence of religion, may we then regard the lower nature-religions as manifestations of that essence? Now it is true that religion only displays the full beauty of its essence when it has reached a maturer stage. Yet the attentive observer who takes account of even the most transitory forms, and who does not scorn even the rudest, will feel convinced that these primitive and barbarous religions likewise contain the germ of that essence which has since gradually developed and borne such glorious fruit. In the un-

civilised man this vital principle naturally takes the form of trembling awe, of a shrinking dread of the mysterious powers, and perhaps of hopeful reliance, while sometimes it shows itself in the opposite extreme of undue familiarity. With his adoration he mingles a large measure of selfishness. His chief aim is to secure the favour of the gods for himself, and he is jealous when others get a share of it. He carefully excludes strangers from the worship of his domestic, or tribal, or national gods; they belong to him alone, and he vindicates their honour and their jurisdiction as against all foreign deities. While he acknowledges a number of different gods, and scrupulously gives to each his due, he generally has one special god of his own, whom he reveres above all others. In order to prevent his god from forsaking him or withdrawing his favour, he builds him a sumptuous dwelling, and embellishes it with the richest decorations that his barbarous taste can suggest. He honours him with costly banquets, and offers him the most precious objects he possesses. Nay, in order to prevent the god from escaping or being stolen, he even binds him with chains—a barbarous custom of which the chaining of Arês, the god of war, at Sparta, and the clipping of the wings of Nikê, the Athenian goddess of victory, were curious survivals. All that pertains to his god, everything in which he believes his spirit to reside, he regards as precious and sacred (just as civilised men cherish the

memorials of their departed friends, or as the devout Catholic prizes the relics of his saints or the fragments of the cross), and he loves to carry such mementoes about with him wherever he goes. For he, too, regards his god as the highest being he can imagine, as his ideal of perfection, as the Lord and Master to whom he and all his possessions belong, whom he loves above all things, although awe-stricken by His mysterious power, and who fills all his thoughts, rules all his actions, and dominates his whole life.

Through all these stages religion had to pass before it assumed the form in which we now know it. Yet its vital principle has ever been adoration. Can we wonder that its heart beats more feebly, and that its enthusiasm cools, in times when many of the enlightened leaders of men deny the existence of anything higher than what is visible and tangible, when the multitude desire nothing better than *panem et circenses*, food and amusement? And is not our time characterised by a want of reverence for all that the fathers prized, and by a tendency to depreciate and trample under foot everything that rises above mediocrity? Is it not an age of positivism, of levelling down, of ochlocracy, and of quite a passion for hard facts? These are things we cannot help observing; but, if we are right in regarding them as signs of the times, we may take comfort in the thought that such periods pass away, as they have done more than once in bygone ages. A time always comes

when the deluded ones see the error of their ways, when they humbly confess that man cannot live by bread alone, when their souls thirst for the living God, as the hunted stag panteth for the water-brooks—a time when poor human hearts go forth in love towards the One whom alone they can truly adore.

LECTURE IX.

INQUIRY INTO THE ORIGIN OF RELIGION.

We are confronted to-day with a difficult problem—What is the origin of religion? In the opinion of many, it is futile to attempt to solve it; yet I think we are bound to face the question. The reluctance of those who decline to consider it often arises from positivist leanings, oftener perhaps from indolence. Persons of the former class hesitate to take a single step beyond the domain of what is directly perceptible, while those of the latter think it safer and more comfortable to persuade themselves and others that the problem is insoluble. But neither of these grounds ought to prevent us from at least considering it, if our science is to continue worthy of its name.

Let us begin by stating the question as accurately as possible. For it seems to me that there is still a good deal of misunderstanding about the matter. The question is not, *How* did religion arise, or in other

words, what is its origin in the history of mankind? The question is, *Whence* does it spring, not in one instance but in all, or what is its source in man's spiritual life? These two questions are doubtless inseparable, and are therefore often confounded; but they are by no means identical. The first relates to religion as the aggregate of all those phenomena that we call religious. It is an historical question. For, although we possess no historical record of the oldest forms of religion, either in written documents or in trustworthy traditions, yet historical science, which requires to invoke divination and intuition to create a distinct picture of the past, even when such records exist, can also, with their aid, give us an approximate idea of these forms as they existed in prehistoric times. From what it knows about historic religions it endeavours to deduce and reconstruct those of primitive ages. Convinced that the spiritual life of man must always have been governed by the same laws, and reasoning from the analogy of what we observe in children and in uncivilised peoples, we may form a picture of what religion was in those days when the earliest germs of civilisation began to burst forth. Such a picture must of course be purely hypothetical, but it is of the same nature as that by means of which astronomers try to explain the origin of the solar system, and it is quite as justifiable. We must not attach undue value to it, but we must admit

that the historical inquirer is fully entitled to adopt this method of forming his conclusions.

Such an inquiry belongs, however, to the morphological part of our science, while we are at present concerned with its ontological side. It relates to the beginnings of religious development, and we might justifiably now pass it over in silence. We must, however, without dwelling too long on the subject, examine the chief answers that have been given to the question, if only to show that they by no means solve our problem, as has often been supposed.

We shall have to examine two different hypotheses as to the beginnings of religion — a religious-philosophical, and an anti-religious philosophical. Let us take the first in the form given to it by the German philosopher Fechner.[1] According to him, belief in God rests upon divine revelation, but that revelation is mainly internal, being external only in so far as it is communicated by nature's language of signs, just as the first revelation made by parents to their children is communicated by means of gestures. Nature, he argues, is so ordered as to make men recognise the existence of a power above them. So long as he was unable to distinguish between body and soul, he could make no such distinction as regards external nature.

[1] See the lucid exposition of Fechner's Theory in Pfleiderer's 'Religionsphilosophie,' 2nd ed., ii. 622, and in his more recent 'Geschichte der Religionsphilosophie,' p. 575 *seq.*

He there saw powers greater than his own at work, such powers as the sun, the heavens, the storm, and the thunder. With these powers he put himself into relation, just as he would do with human beings higher than himself. And thus, at the very fountain-head of religion, the theoretical and the practical principle would work together; and in so far as nature, as well as man, lives in God, and God works in both, so the impressions produced both by nature and man's practical needs would in reality be only the working of God Himself upon the being created by Him. The origin of belief in God was thus the working of original divine inspiration through nature and the human soul.

Although this theory has much to recommend it, it is impossible to regard it as an answer to the problem we are now trying to solve. It still requires to be explained—not how men came to recognise the existence of a might superior to their own, for even animals are aware of its existence; or what made them see in external nature the operation of higher powers, of which animals too have some glimmering apprehension — but what induced men to put themselves into relation with these higher powers, as they are wont to do with their superior fellow-men? Herein lies the specifically religious element. God reveals Himself to man through nature and through man's own soul — yes, but what is it that gives the

human soul the necessary receptivity for such divine revelation? We wish, in short, to ascertain the psychological foundation of religion.

The same remarks apply to the anti-religious theory. According to that theory, religion is a consequence of man's ignorance. Being as yet unable to distinguish between the subjective and the objective, he personifies the impersonal powers of nature, and attributes to them emotions and a will, analogous to those of which he is himself conscious. Fear and hope—for he knows his dependence on the powers of nature—impel him to propitiate these powers as if they were human princes and potentates, whose favour may be gained by entreaties and gifts. Religion thus took shape, and was then handed down from generation to generation. At a later period, when people had outgrown these childish notions, they tried, in order to adapt religion to the demands of a higher civilisation, to clothe it in a more æsthetic, a philosophical, scientific, or even ethical garb. But people who think that all these conceptions, however modified, are always in point of fact nothing but freaks of imagination, must necessarily discard religion altogether, and conclude that it is incompatible with our present knowledge of nature.

Now this hypothesis, even as an attempt to account for the origin of religion, is open to a good many objections. But if we assume for a moment that it fairly represents the way in which the earliest form of

religion originated, it accounts after all for nothing but the form; it accounts for nothing but those childish notions which result from lack of scientific knowledge and from general ignorance—for religion itself it cannot account. Long after men had given up such childish notions, long after they had outgrown the mythological and dogmatic conceptions which took their place, religion still survived. And when we are told that none of the creations of our imagination, none of our dreams and subjective emotions, have any objective existence, we are told nothing new. We have got beyond Animism, Therianthropism, and Anthropomorphism. We no longer think of the Deity as a roving spirit, or as an animal or half-animal, or even as a perfect man. We fear to make any image of God, we even deem it profanation. And if we apply to Him our conceptions of self-consciousness and personality, we do so with much reservation, and hasten to make it clear that we do not mean these terms to include any idea of limitation. We use them simply because they express the highest elements in our own nature, while we quite admit that God—though not indeed unknown to man, for we know Him by His works around us and within us—is the Ineffable, the Illimitable, the Inscrutable. Yet even those who recognise this truth, including not a few distinguished men of science and profound philosophic thinkers, still cling to religion, and do not feel compelled to abandon it. Religion must therefore surely

be something more than a mere confusion of subject and object. Surely it cannot be founded on a mistake, on an intellectual aberration. Observe, I am not speaking here as an apologist. I am not pleading on behalf of the truth of religion and its right to exist. I merely say that so superficial an explanation as the above can never satisfy even the purely scientific and philosophical inquirer.

Whatever, therefore, be our conception of the earliest form of religion, the anti-religious hypothesis—even were it unalloyed with the ulterior object of branding religion itself as a fruit of ignorance—cannot help us to find religion's actual source. Assuming that religion began with Naturism, the worship of the powers of nature, and of natural phenomena, as if they were animate beings; or that it began with Animism, in the form we have called Spiritism, that is to say, the worship of spirits embodied in all kinds of objects, and roaming from one to another at will; or that it began when men advanced from the worship of superior living men, such as princes, priests, and prophets, and even of deceased relations and ancestors, to that of superhuman beings, who were then usually the personified powers of phenomena of nature;—assuming, further, that all these superhuman beings were but creations of fancy, and that all these conceptions are easily accounted for by primitive man's untutored state of mind and his in-

experience of human nature and the world; — the question still remains, What prompted him to imagine such beings? Imagination only creates images of thoughts already present to the mind. And although these thoughts are always awakened by the influence of some external stimulus, they are only awakened, not created, by such influence. Unless the stimulus finds something responsive within the man himself, it yields no fruit. What is this responsiveness in the case of religion? That is our question.

We cannot enter upon a complete history of this question. The time at our disposal will not even allow us to review and criticise all the answers that have been given to it. Some of these are wide as the poles apart, others present slight variations only. As a bare enumeration of them would be unprofitable, I propose to reduce the various solutions to some of the main types under which the more important may be grouped.

The first type is that which regards religion as the result of some process of reasoning. To this class belongs the theory which derives religion from what has been called the instinct of causality, and which may be stated thus: "Man is impelled, by virtue of his innate mode of thinking, to seek for the cause of everything he perceives. He does not find out the natural causes of things until a late period. This demands toilsome research, the results of which can

only be accepted on the ground of authority by the less gifted, who are scarcely able even to follow the methods employed. The discovery of laws of nature further requires profound study, while the mass of mankind are ignorant of their very existence. Whatever, therefore, he cannot explain on natural grounds (which at first means almost everything) the unsophisticated observer ascribes to invisible, intangible, supernatural, or at least to superhuman causes, which he necessarily conceives as thinking, feeling, and willing beings, and which thus become his gods. The further he progresses in his knowledge of nature, the wider the domains of science become, the more the chain of causes is lengthened, so much the more the supernatural element will be thrust into the background. But however well he can now account, on natural grounds, for what he once attributed to direct divine interposition, there still remains something which baffles every attempt to explain it on such grounds; there still remains the question, Who laid down these laws of nature, who called into being the marvellous order of the world? There will still remain the ceaseless search for a highest, and at the same time final, cause. This gives rise to a belief in God, and of such belief religion is the fruit."

That this peculiarity of the human mind contributes to the genesis of religion I do not dispute; and still less would I deny that it is a factor in the for-

mation of the conceptions of faith. But it is impossible to admit that it is the actual source of religion itself. It may give birth to philosophy and science, it may form the basis of a philosophical system, and it may convey some idea of the order of the world to those who cannot study science or philosophy, but it cannot produce religion. For religion is something more than a recognition of supernatural causes or of a highest cause. The savage, for instance, does not make gods of all the powers which he regards as beings of a higher order, and also as conscious beings. Some of them he recognises, but does not worship; there are not a few whom he even exorcises, opposes, or tries to banish. It therefore still requires to be explained how he comes to put himself into relation with these beings, to suppose that he is somehow akin to them, and even to ascribe to them mental and moral qualities which have no connection with their functions as powers of nature.

The above explanation having proved unsatisfactory, other solutions have been attempted. Religion arises, according to Rauwenhoff, from the coincidence of man's moral consciousness with the naturalistic and animistic views of the world. Man would then arrive at religious conviction by a process of reasoning like the following: "I hear a voice within me which often bids me to do what conflicts with my wishes and inclinations, or forbids me to do precisely what I most ardently

desire. Whether I call that voice conscience, or an unconditional sense of duty, or a categorical imperative, it testifies of a power above me, which acts and rules within me." This power, then, is the God whom he obeys, serves, and adores. Even in the lower strata of religion men figure to themselves a certain moral order of the world, although in a very primitive form, and this moral order must have a director and an origin. Such directors then become his gods, whom he identifies with the powers of nature which inspire him with hope and fear; and thus he comes to ascribe to them mental faculties. Here, too, we see the instinct of causality at work; but it is not by its application to the phenomena of nature alone that religion is produced. This result is only reached when that instinct is also applied to moral phenomena.

This hypothesis places me rather in a dilemma, as I can neither accept nor reject it. At a later stage we shall see that it contains a germ of truth. At all events, it proceeds upon a due observation of the facts. It is true that the mental emotion commonly called conscience is often objectivised as a warning and reproving voice from a higher world, echoed in man's inmost soul. It is not Christians only who recognise it as a divine voice. In all the religions of antiquity we find that the accusing voice of an uneasy conscience gives rise to a dread of the wrath of the gods, who chastise guilty man by fire

and sword, famine and pestilence, or to a fear of the Erinyes, or avenging Furies, and Angels of destruction. Nay, so closely has conscience always been associated with religion that we use liberty of conscience and religious liberty as synonyms. Nor can it be denied that man's moral consciousness or sense of duty, if this term be preferred, is an important factor in the genesis and the subsequent development of religion. And no one will dispute that it exerts a great influence on the formation and progress of the conceptions of faith. But this is by no means tantamount to saying that it is the origin of religion.

The chief difficulty, however, consists in the vagueness of the ideas here dealt with. There is some difference of opinion as to the precise meaning of the terms conscience and unconditional sense of duty. In the Romanic languages "conscience" generally has more meanings than one. What is conscience in the religious sense? Some authorities (like Schenkel) not only deduce religion from it, but make it the foundation of a complete dogmatic system; others (like Opzoomer and Rauwenhoff) maintain that it is entirely devoid of content, and is purely of a formal nature. If we adopt the latter view of it, the term "unconditional sense of duty" would in fact lose all moral significance, as it might quite as well lead us astray and prompt us to commit the most atrocious crimes, as indicate the right path of purity and virtue. According to this

view it was the dictates of conscience that alike prompted the worshippers of Moloch (properly Melek, or Malik) to make their children pass through the fire in the Valley of Gehinnom, and impelled the prophets to inveigh against the practice in the name of Yahve; the martyrs, whom neither threats, nor torture, nor death could induce to renounce their faith, and their persecutors, who threw them to the lions or burned them at the stake, acted alike from conscientious motives; Creon, who refused to bury the body of Polynices, as being that of a traitor, and Antigone, who disregarded the royal command in order to obey the behests of the gods, were equally conscientious. Some fallacy must lurk here. Is it not just as if one should refuse to distinguish between good coin and base? Or, to take a more germane illustration, does it not amount to putting the wholesome creations of an imagination inspired by religious sentiment on a level with the distorted phantoms that haunt the brain of a fever-stricken patient or a madman? It is therefore a sound moral instinct that prompts us to speak of a misdirected or deadened conscience. And we should do well to consider carefully whether actions which are apparently prompted by conviction, or conscientious motives, do not in reality emanate from a disordered brain, or from a mind actuated by the lower passions. It is also worth noting that, while the words conscience and sense of duty are chiefly used in a moral sense,

they are employed with an analogous meaning in many other domains, in art and science, and generally in what may be called the worship of the beautiful and the true. Do we not, for instance, often speak of a conscientious work of art, or of a conscientious scientific research? In short, the doctrine of conscience and sense of duty urgently requires revision; and before we can draw conclusions from it regarding the source of religion, we must have some clearer definition of the emotions it embraces and of their true significance.

It is certain, at all events, that this last theory is also open to the objection that it makes religion the product of reasoning, whereas reasoning and reflection are always of later growth. It is undoubtedly true that conscience is generally understood to mean the voice of some higher being, like the *δαιμόνιον τι*, or genius, in which Socrates believed; but the question constantly recurs, How came men to hear that voice? It may be quite true that religious persons explain these emotions by a process of reasoning; but they are religious first, and they reason afterwards. What makes them religious? That is what we want to know.

If religion cannot be the product of reasoning, we may perhaps try to find its origin in sentiment. In this direction also various attempts have already been made. It has been thought sufficient to lay it down that the source of religion must be sought for in a special religious sense or feeling — a solution of the

problem which reminds us of a well-known saying of Goethe, that, where thoughts are lacking at the right time, a word is often aimlessly uttered. For this is an explanation that explains nothing, except that the philosopher who propounded it must have been sadly at a loss for ideas.

Of course there is such a thing as religious feeling, just as there are religious thought and religious will, just as there is an artistic feeling, a moral feeling, a sense of truth; and such religious feeling is a proof of the existence of religion, but it does not advance us a single step in our investigation. Nor do we get any help from the "unconditional sense of dependence" in which Schleiermacher seeks for the source of religion. Not, however, that this explains nothing, for it certainly explains one of the elements of religion; but it does not account for religion as a whole. We need not, however, criticise this theory more fully, as it has long since been rejected as inadequate by all competent authorities.

But there is another theory, the advocates of which rightly keep in view all the component parts of religious life, and which, if we were to take into account both the number and the authority of the voices in its favour, might be regarded as conclusively established. For it has met with the approval of some of the greatest thinkers of modern times, and of men of entirely different schools. A Hegelian of the extreme "left," like Feuerbach, one of the "right," like Lipsius, and Eduard

von Hartmann, Otto Pfleiderer (who, however, since 1878 has abandoned it for another theory), and at an earlier period Zeller and Hoekstra, have all accepted it, with slight variations, as the best explanation of the origin of religion. And some twenty years ago I agreed with them. Although I do not now think that it brings us to our goal, I am still of opinion that it carries us in the right direction.

This theory is, that religion is the result of a conflict between the sense of self and the sense of necessity, or, as it is sometimes put, that it is produced by the tension between man's self-consciousness and his consciousness of the world. Rauwenhoff, one of its opponents, has stated it with great clearness. The argument may be summarised as follows: Man, placed in a world where he is surrounded by many different powers which endanger his welfare and his very existence, but conscious of his right to exist in that world, seeks for help and support in a power to which the world itself is subject. This power he finds in the beneficent powers of nature, to which he owes his subsistence and salvation, and which he therefore personifies and worships. Or, as it is more simply expressed by Feuerbach, "the fundamental hypothesis (*die Grundvoraussetzung*) of belief in God is man's wish to be God himself. Man, however, soon discovers to his sorrow that he is not a god; and what he wishes to be thus becomes merely a conceived, a believed, an ideal being. Limited in his facul-

ties, but unlimited in his wishes, man is therefore un-divine in power, and un-human in volition. God thus forms the other half that man lacks; what man imperfectly is, God is perfectly; what man can only desire to be, God actually is. This, then, is the subjective side of the process; the objective side is afforded by the phenomena of nature, by what is experienced, by the actuality in the world around him with which he associates his ideal persons." This, at any rate, is a fine piece of psychological analysis, and one that we can appreciate, although we repudiate Feuerbach's negative conclusion that the whole process is purely subjective. He regards it as a process of mere self-delusion, in which there is nothing real "except man's desire that it should be so," a dictum which we should expect from his exaggerated intellectualism and what has been called his anthropologism, but which falls entirely beyond the province of scientific criticism.

You will observe that the instinct of causality—that necessary cast of human thought which impels men to seek for the cause of everything, and which is thus supposed to account for the origin of religion—has been adopted in this case also, though only as a subordinate part of the more comprehensive theory. For to this instinct alone we must attribute the hypothesis that men regard the desires of their heart, transformed into persons by their inventive imagination, as the causes of

the powers they see at work in nature. I therefore think that the psychological process above mentioned might be described somewhat differently. The personification of the powers which primitive man sees at work in nature is not the outcome of his religious consciousness. It is rather a rudimentary philosophy, a crude cosmogony. His gods are originally and essentially ideal personages, some only of whom, perhaps the majority, but certainly *not all of whom, he identifies with the beings that preside over the phenomena of nature.* By virtue of the law of the unity of the human mind, men are constrained to bring their religious and their philosophical views into harmony. And thus arise nature-gods and nature-myths, which are not, however, and never have been, the only ones. It is a very common error, and one against which I emphatically protest, to suppose that all the gods were once nature-gods, and all the myths nature-myths. Were this the case, the evolution of ethical religions out of the naturistic would be inexplicable, for it would be impossible. Along with the naturistic element we discern, even among the lowest strata of religions, a spiritualistic element; and it is from this germ, which has taken root and grown up in the soul of some rarely gifted personage, or has attained full maturity in some small community, that the spiritualistic-ethical religions have emanated. To this element belong, from the outset, many beings of the spiritualistic period. In the

same category, though on a higher level, and still within the limits of the nature-religions, we may place the Greek Moirê, Atê, Dikê, Nikê, Litai, and many others; and so, too, the personified abstractions of the Romans, such as Salus, Honos, Virtus, Pax, Libertas, Pietas, and Pudicitia, some of which abstractions came at a later period to be associated with higher nature-gods. And is it not noteworthy that the great gods gradually lose the character of nature-gods which they had from the outset? For we observe that their divine personality gradually becomes disengaged, so to speak, from their natural; and so much so that we are often now ignorant, indeed their own worshippers were at loss to say, what agency of nature they represented. I need not now dwell longer on this matter, but it offers a rich field for further study. I should like, however, to make it clear that this theory of the origin of nature-myths has got beyond the point at which the origin of religion should have been accounted for, and has passed on to an explanation of the genesis of the *forms* of religion.

It seems to me that the chief objections to the theory just sketched arise partly from the fact that it combines the impulses of religious with those of philosophical needs, partly from the form of abstract speculation in which it has been clothed by the philosophers of religion, and partly also from the conclusion to which it has led Feuerbach. But I have another objection to it. Though we regard as unwarranted his dictum that

all is delusion, though we divest the hypothesis of its technical terms, and remove from it all that pertains to a purely philosophical cosmogony, yet it still continues to account for the origin of the conception of faith rather than for religious belief itself, and for the piety and adoration which we found to be the essence of religion. This is apparent, for instance, from the words in which Pfleiderer describes it: "The seeking and finding of a power at once akin to man and exalted above him, which, in communion with him, completely supplements his being—that is the origin of belief in God."

Yet, as I have said, this theory leads us a step in the right direction. I shall therefore disregard all the other theories, and merely mention the latest, that of Professor Siebeck, who traces religion to man's dissatisfaction with the world and the worldly, as such, whence religion derives its character of world-negation ("Weltverneinung")—a theory, however, which is closely akin to the one just discussed. Passing over all these attempts to solve our problem, I shall now submit to you my own view of the subject, and endeavour to explain the conclusions I have reached.

Religion, says Feuerbach, proceeds from man's wishes, desires, and aspirations, which he then comes to regard as objects, and which he worships as higher beings; or, according to others, it is the outcome of his dissatisfaction with the external world, which begets the desire for a super-terrestrial world. No one denies that such

desires and such dissatisfaction actually exist, and find utterance in many ways. But whence do they come? Why is man discontented with his condition and surroundings? Why should he torment himself with wishes which he never sees fulfilled anywhere around him, and which the rationalistic philosopher declares to be illusions? Why is he not as sensible as the dumb animal, the senseless beast of the field, as he calls it in his pride, which never wearies itself with seeking for what the earth does not produce, or what earthly existence does not offer, but is satisfied with what is within its reach and lives happy and content? Why? Surely because he cannot help it. Mere animal, selfish enjoyment cannot satisfy him permanently, because he feels that, as a man, he has an inward impulse which constrains him to overstep the boundaries of the finite and to strive after an infinite perfection, though he knows it to be unattainable for him as an earthly being. The Infinite, the Absolute, very Being, as opposed to continual becoming and perishing—or call it as you will—that is the principle which gives him constant unrest, because it dwells within him.

At this point of our inquiry we encounter Professor Max Müller. According to him, the perception or apprehension of the Infinite, the yearning of the soul after God, is the source of all religion in the human heart.[1] This, he thinks, can be shown by historical

[1] Theosophy: Gifford Lectures, iv. 480.

evidence to have been the one element shared by all religions in common,[1] and he has several times tried to demonstrate that man really apprehends this infinite. Though attacked on all sides, he has adhered to his proposition, and has endeavoured to justify it by further explanations. By apprehension, and even by sensuous perception, he says that he only meant the pressure which that Infinite brings to bear on our senses, and by means of which it asserts its presence.[2] He also distinguished between the divine presence which Kant beheld in the starry firmament, which represents the infinite in nature, and that divine presence which he perceived in his own conscience, or within his own invisible self, which is the infinite in man.[3] And when he was charged with an unpardonable anachronism in assigning so abstract a term as the Infinite to the earliest period of the human intellect, he replied that this abstract term, like all others, originated in something very concrete, from which the idea we now form of it has gradually developed.[4]

Notwithstanding this defence, I am at a loss to discover the origin of religion in a perception of the Infinite. It seems to me very much like a sophism on the part of that distinguished writer to say that man, on the brink of the Finite perceivable by him, perceives

[1] Ibid., p. vii.

[2] Contributions to the Science of Mythology, p. 292 *seq.*

[3] Anthropological Religion : Gifford Lectures, iii. 393.

[4] Contributions, p. 293.

the Infinite. Man assumes it, he postulates it, he cannot help thinking that infinity lies on the farther side of the boundary of his perception, but he cannot actually see it. It is only a hypothesis, though it be one he is driven to set up. The phrase "perception of the Infinite" seems, moreover, to be a contradiction in terms, unless inward perception is meant, a perception of the Infinite within us. It is only when Professor Müller appeals to the latter that I am at one with him.

I do not, however, assert that religion emanates from a perception of the Infinite within us, because such perception requires a considerable measure of self-knowledge and reflection, which is only attainable long after religion has come into existence, long after the religious spirit has revealed itself. The origin of religion consists in the fact that man *has* the Infinite within him, even before he is himself conscious of it, and whether he recognises it or not. Whether this be an illusion or truth we do not at present inquire; nor does the question strictly belong to the scope of our research. We merely state a fact; and we may express it in the just and beautiful language of Alfred de Musset—

"Je ne puis; malgré moi l'Infini me tourmente,
Je n'y saurais songer sans crainte et sans espoir;
Et quoi qu'on en ait dit, ma raison s'épouvante
De ne pas le comprendre et pourtant de le voir"—

provided, of course, we understand the last word in a figurative, and not in a literal sense.

Whatever name we give it—instinct, or an innate, original, and unconscious form of thought, or form of conception—it is the specifically human element in man, the idea which dominates him. He gives it precedence over the Finite ; for with this he only becomes acquainted by means of the perception of his senses, and it is only later that he converts it, by means of reasoning, into a general idea. But it is neither by perception nor by reflection that he acquires the idea of the Infinite, although that idea finds support in psychological perceptions, and becomes an object of reflection. Even primitive man, as soon as he comes to apprehend the Finite, regards it as perplexing and unnatural. It has been observed in the case of children, for example, that they are unable to form any conception of death. And so, too, there are childlike peoples. Like the author of the description of Paradise in the Book of Genesis, they all take for granted that man is by nature immortal, and, not that his immortality requires to be proved, but that his death requires to be accounted for. Mr Andrew Lang in his recent work[1] has given us a series of very interesting examples of this. Like everything finite, death seems to people in the earliest stages of civilisation an unnatural thing. Something must surely have happened to bring so

[1] Modern Mythology, chap. viii., p. 176 *seq.*

illogical an event into the world. It must be the work of hostile spirits or of sorcery; it must have been caused by some crime or transgression, perhaps even by some imprudence or mistake. The traditions of many different peoples, differing in origin and in development, express the same idea. There was a time when neither sickness nor death was known upon earth. According to Persian traditions, the oldest race of men never died, but still lives, under its mythical chief, in tranquil beatitude, far from the suffering and dying humanity of these latter ages. According to the Babylonian legend, the first race of men was destroyed as a punishment for their evil deeds; but one just man was saved, along with his tribe; and to these an everlasting habitation has been assigned, where the brave hero of the sun can alone enter to disturb their repose. The unsophisticated savage cannot even believe in death when he sees it before his eyes. He calls it a sleep, a condition of unconsciousness; the spirit has quitted the body, but it may return. And so he always watches for several days to see if this will happen—a custom which still survives in some of the higher strata of civilisation, as in China, and among the Zarathushtrians. And if the dead man's spirit does not return, why then he has only vanished in order to enter into another body or to join the super-terrestrial spirits. And when at length the savage has passed that stage, and when experience

has taught him, but too clearly, that not a single man exists who is not subject to death, then, as we have already seen, he consoles himself by creating the most glorious expectations for the future, visions of unalloyed happiness and everlasting bliss!

And it is to these illusions, as Feuerbach has called them, to these self-deceptions, to this Fata Morgana, this will-of-the-wisp, that religion is said to owe its origin! Can such childish dreams have given rise to that faith which has proved so stupendous a power in the world's history, at once destroying and inspiring, or to those hopes which have sustained millions of our fellow-men amidst terrible sufferings, and lightened their eyes in the agony of death? Some people may answer in the affirmative. But it is certainly not these childish imaginings that give rise to religion. The process is the very reverse. It is man's original, unconscious, innate sense of infinity that gives rise to his first stammering utterances of that sense, and to all his beautiful dreams of the past and the future. These utterances and these dreams may have long since passed away, but the sense of infinity from which they proceed remains a constant quantity. It is inherent in the human soul. It lies at the root of man's whole spiritual life. It is revealed in his intellectual, his æsthetic, and his moral life. What man of science, what philosopher, what genuine artist, what truly moral man,

although quite aware of the limitations of his knowledge and ability, will not ceaselessly test his powers anew and strive to burst through his barriers? Even the moments of discouragement he experiences prove that he is dissatisfied with the limitations of his activity. And so it is in the religious sphere. Few of those who are completely under the influence of one-sided rationalism or materialism, children of a sceptical age which declares everything uncertain that does not rest upon perception by the senses, and which overrates empirical science — few of those who feel themselves thus driven to the conclusion that "the infinite within us" is a beautiful but fatal self-deception—can feel happy in that conclusion. They will perhaps try to brave it out. The more uncomfortable they feel inwardly, the more loudly perhaps they will boast. Or they will fall into a gloomy pessimism and they will ask—either in private, ashamed of the confession, or in public, and not without bitterness—Is life worth living? Or perhaps, like the sceptic poet, they will confess, with charming candour, that "malgré moi l'Infini me tourmente!"

It would fall beyond the province of our science to prove that this belief in the infinite within us is well-founded, and to vindicate the right of religion to exist. Our science is psychological, and its task is merely to search for the origin of religion in man's spiritual life.

We leave the rest to Apologetics and Dogmatics, and, on the theoretical side, to Metaphysics, or that general philosophy which seeks to fathom the deepest foundation of all things. But, though not called upon to prove the truth of religion, our science is not entitled to pronounce it an illusion. This would not only be an unwarrantable conclusion, but it would make human existence an insoluble riddle, it would brand mankind as crazy dreamers, it would pronounce the source of all the best work they have ever done in this world to be sheer folly.

A further task, however, is still incumbent on our science. We must inquire whether the results of sensuous perception are not rather supplemented by those of inward perception than irreconcilably opposed to it. A new field is thus opened up, a field of investigation too little cultivated, but one which promises a rich harvest. The conclusions it is likely to yield cannot therefore as yet be summed up. An inquiry of this kind would be valuable, because unbiassed science ought not to be blind to the truth that man is not merely a reasoning being, not merely intellect — the truth that his conduct would be foolish and mean if he did nothing without being able to give a good reason for it, or to justify it to his understanding— the truth, in short, that his emotions as well as his reasoning powers possess their own inalienable

rights. And the right of religion is a right of the emotions.

Our object to-day has been to discover *whence* religion proceeds. It remains to be seen *how* it wells up from its source. In particular we shall have to determine the place it occupies in man's spiritual life. To this task our concluding lecture will be devoted.

LECTURE X.

THE PLACE OF RELIGION IN SPIRITUAL LIFE.

We have endeavoured to discover the origin of religion, the actual fountainhead from which it springs; and we came to the conclusion that it is to be found in man's more or less unconscious sense of the Infinite within him, or of his participation in the Infinite. We did not, however, examine the mode in which religion emanates thence. The only question we attempted to answer was, how man comes to be religious. But how religion is born within him is a somewhat different question. Strictly speaking, it belongs rather to the morphological part of our science; but it is so closely bound up with the ontological part, and is so entirely determined by the main question, that we have been unable to discuss it sooner, while it is too important to be passed over in silence now.

And here we again encounter those principles in which thinkers of different schools, erroneously in our opinion, have sought for the origin of religion, but

which undoubtedly contribute to its birth—namely, man's instinct of causality, his dissatisfaction with the worldly and the transitory, and his moral consciousness, or, in other words, his sense of truth, his sense of the beautiful, and his sense of duty. But while all contribute, their action is joint and mutual, and we are unable to assign the foremost place to any one of them. At a very early period man gains the experience that, although the aspirations he cherishes are infinite, it is beyond his power, in this world at least, to realise them. Although his mind brooks no limits, and although he is the microcosm in which he sees the macrocosm reflected, he soon becomes aware that he only knows in part; and he becomes more aware of it as he advances in knowledge. Ever more clearly, in the school of life, he becomes acquainted with the limitations of his powers. For his welfare, his livelihood, his very existence, he feels that he is dependent, physically and morally, on a variety of external circumstances. The world he perceives corresponds in its reality but little with the ideal world created by his imagination; and the more his experience of life increases and the more deeply he reflects, the less is he satisfied with the real world. Not only he himself, but all around him, is limited, imperfect, transient. His intercourse with his fellow-men, with friends and enemies, and the social life from which he cannot escape, impose limitations upon him, and make him

feel that he cannot control his own destinies, that they are partly in other hands, and that he is a mere atom in a community to whose demands his will must bow. In many respects society disappoints him. If he had his own way, he would order it otherwise, he would thoroughly reform, or perhaps subvert it; but he feels that he is powerless. Powerless without, he is almost equally powerless within. He has a conception of goodness, a sense of duty, he may perhaps have formed an ideal of self-denial and self-consecration; he is conscious that he possesses powers and talents, and that it is his life's vocation to cultivate and develop them; yet how lamentably does his practice fall short of his theory; how inferior to his good intentions is his power to carry them out! Where is he to look for support in this struggle? Whom can he trust if he has lost trust in himself? Has he no friends, or powerful protectors? Alas! they too have sadly disappointed him. In moments of enthusiasm we sometimes speak of eternal friendship and love, or of eternal vows, and we often hear of perpetual peace, and perpetual edicts and treaties; but what has become of them all? How brief has their existence often been! How frail are often the ties that were intended to bind for ever; how many solemn treaties and edicts turn out to be as valueless and perishable as the paper on which they are written!

And so overwhelming may a man's disappointments

be, that, in vexation, bitterness, and despair, he loses all belief in the reality of the Infinite, and pronounces all his ceaseless longings to be idle dreams and delusions. There always have been such doubters. Even in the Ṛgveda the pious man complains that he has been mockingly asked, "Where is Indra now? What has become of his succour?" And the same question is asked by the Hebrew Psalmist, "Where is now thy God?"[1] Such unbelievers are even to be found among primitive peoples, as missionaries assure us. They are commonest, however, in times when intellect and material interests are so highly prized that the dictates of the emotions are disregarded. But in the case of the majority of mankind this belief in the Infinite is too firmly rooted, too inseparably interwoven with their spiritual life, to be discarded in deference to mere perceptions of the finite. This belief gives them a happy sense of being special objects of the care of the beneficent spirits, whom in their childlike philosophy they have personified as beings after their own image; and, when they have reached a higher stage of progress, they believe in the protection of that Almighty God against whom all powers in heaven and earth are powerless. This belief also teaches them to regard these spirits, or that Holy One, as the vindicators of truth and justice, the antagonists of the unbelief and deceit of which they are the victims, the avengers of forgotten promises and

[1] Psalm xlii. 10; cf. xiv. 1, liii. 1, lxxix. 10, and cxv. 2.

broken vows, and (when a higher plane of religious culture has been reached) as the supreme lawgivers from whom the whole moral law derives its origin. And so too, when they contemplate the world of perishable things, with all its limits, its sins, and its miseries, it is the same faith that makes them dream of a perfect state which they have forfeited by their transgressions, and makes them hope for, nay, confidently believe in, the existence of a better world, where all these limitations, imperfections, and sorrows shall be no more—a kingdom of God finally triumphant on earth and in heaven alike, a kingdom to which they themselves belong. And lastly, well knowing their own weakness, and having learned by experience how vain is the help of man, they are prompted by the same belief to seek for strength and support in communion with the higher world, whether they regard it as peopled by a plurality of powers, or have advanced so far as to sum up superhuman power in one infinite, eternal Being. Religion is thus generated by the co-operation of several different factors, while the source from which it springs (psychologically, not metaphysically speaking) must ever lie deep in the inmost recesses of the human soul.

But while we have thus endeavoured to trace religion to its source, and to examine the process of its genesis, there still remains this important question to be answered: What place does religion occupy in our spiritual life? In what relation does it stand to the

various other manifestations of that life? This is perhaps the most difficult question of all. Let me, however, again emphasise the fact that my sole object throughout has been to sketch an Introduction to the science of religion—that is to say, to indicate the lines upon which a thorough study of it ought to proceed. What is the relation between religion, on the one hand, and science, art, and the ethical life, in all its departments, on the other? Such is the problem which I propose to glance at to-day. I cannot claim to have finally solved it; but I am at least bound to submit it to you and to state my views on the subject.

Religion has sometimes been described as either a kind of science or philosophy, or as a kind of poetry, or as a heteronomous system of morality, or perhaps as a compound of two or more of these elements. It would in that case belong either to the intellectual, or to the æsthetic, or to the ethical domain, or it might be regarded as a transition from one of these domains to another. When Vinet somewhere calls religion a science, we must not take this in its literal sense. Others, however, regard the doctrines of religion as a primitive kind of philosophy which has survived from an earlier period, but which must gradually be superseded by the fruits of maturer reflection. The theological period of the world, as the Positivists teach, will be succeeded by the purely philosophical, and, with the latter, religion will come to an end. According to Karl

Schwartz,[1] dogma and cult are merely two imperfect and intermediate forms of knowing and acting, being transitional to the pure knowledge of science and the pure action of concrete morality. He does not of course mean by this that religion is only a passing phenomenon in the development of mankind, for no one has striven more earnestly than he to confirm and strengthen religious life. But he doubtless means that the conceptions of faith in the form of dogmas, and religious observances as an organised system of worship, are mere transitory phenomena, while religion itself will still continue to exist, partly as a science, and partly as a moral rule of life.

Others again regard religion as a manifestation of the æsthetic sentiment, as a kind of poetry. According to the *esprits d'élite*, the value of religion consists, not in the cruder externals in which the vulgar delight, but solely in its poetic or æsthetic element. "Si vous étiez chrétien," as Ernest Renan once wrote to his friend Bertholet,[2] "la partie esthétique du christianisme, vraiment saisie, suffirait pour satisfaire à ce besoin. Car, au fait, la religion n'est que cela, la part de l'idéal dans la vie humaine, une façon moins épurée, mais plus originale et plus populaire d'adorer." And it is well known that Professor E. F. Apelt of Jena, a disciple of Fries, the philosopher, actually built up, some forty years

[1] Das Wesen der Religion, 1847.

[2] Revue de Paris, 1 août 1897, p. 504.

ago, a whole system of the philosophy of religion upon æsthetic ideas.[1]

But there is a far greater number of persons who, if they do not entirely identify religion with morality, regard the former as a manifestation of moral consciousness which corresponds with a certain stage of development, and is alone adapted to that stage. They look upon religion as practically amounting to a recognition of the moral laws within us, as identical with the commands of a Lawgiver above us. And in their view, the religious life is merely an imperfect form of the moral life; while the moral life is destined, when it attains its highest development, to rise superior to all heteronomous dictation, obeying no law from without or from above, but governed solely by the law written in our hearts. The classical expression for this view is Matthew Arnold's definition of religion as "morality touched by emotion."

After all that I have said about the essence of religion, does it need detailed argument to show that those who reason thus are on a wrong track? There are of course points of contact between religion and the other activities of man's spiritual life. How can it be otherwise? For the human spirit is one and indivisible, though revealing itself in different ways. Nay,

[1] Religionsphilosophie, Leipzig, 1860, *e.g.* p. 142: "In den religiösen Stimmungen des Gefühls beziehen wir das Menschenleben sowohl wie das erscheinende Weltall, *kraft der ästhetischen Ideen* die daran liegen, auf die überirdischen Wahrheiten des Glaubens."

there is more than contact, there is kinship between the religious, the philosophical, the poetical, and the moral principles within us. How close this relationship is will appear immediately. Man's eagerness to know and to penetrate to the very root of things, and his longing to soar upon the wings of imagination to the world of the ideal, are shared by all truly religious people, and by every philosopher and every poet alike. Nor can it be denied that religion has its own ethics and its doctrines of life, and that true piety is displayed, not merely in rites and ceremonies, but in the believer's whole life. As our study of religious development has already satisfied us, religion requires, for the promotion of its growth, to assimilate certain elements from science and philosophy, from æsthetics and ethics : how could it do so, unless it were akin to them ? The fact is, that morality, art, and science cannot be severed from religion, except to their mutual injury ; but it is equally certain that they ought not to be confounded with one another.

They differ essentially. But, in the objects at which they respectively aim, they differ less than one would suppose. The differences might be stated thus. What the religious man strives for is peace of soul, the true and eternal life, unity with God. With him the paramount question is, " What shall I do to be saved ? " The philosopher and the man of science, on the other hand, are solely concerned with gaining knowledge.

The poet finds happiness in his ideals. Like every artist, he is satisfied if he succeeds in animating his creations with the beautiful that he has met with in the world around him, or that lives within himself. Lastly, the moral law only requires us, within the limits of our earthly existence, to perform faithfully all our duties to our fellow-men, whether as members of the family, society, or the State, or to walk uprightly, honestly, and purely. Yet, while we have stated these differences, there is in reality no sharp demarcation between these departments of spiritual life. For in the ethical life, as in the religious, peace of mind is one of the objects sought for, and it is only to be found in a state of unceasing development. Nor does the man of science rest satisfied with knowing. He desires also to understand, and to systematise and unify his knowledge. The philosopher tries to fathom the origin of things, but he also expects that philosophy will reconcile him with himself and the world. So that scientists and philosophers alike, to a certain extent, also seek for contentment of soul. And does the artist never aim, in the pursuit of his art, at something beyond æsthetic enjoyment? Does he not often throw his whole soul into his works, and thus stake his happiness upon their success?

The difference must be sought for elsewhere. It consists chiefly in this, that, while science, art, and morality yield a certain satisfaction, or even a considerable measure of happiness, they never produce that

perfect peace of mind, that entire reconciliation with one's self and one's worldly lot, which are the fruits of religion, and have ever characterised the truly pious of all ages. The greatest genius, the acutest investigator, and the profoundest thinker, who have studied the most difficult of problems, and have made darkness light for themselves and others, will be the first to confess the limitations of their knowledge and the insolubility of many of their problems, and to admit that faith alone can answer the momentous and vital questions—Whence and whither? Poetry and art may brighten this earthly life with their lustre, they may mitigate sorrow and soothe the troubled mind; but they can only give true rest to the soul when they serve to bring home to it some great religious truth in a beautiful and striking form. And even the strictly moral man, who can boast of having kept all the commandments from his youth upwards—unless utterly deluded by self-satisfaction—must often feel that he lacks something, the one thing needful. And further, while no single function of man's inner life is exclusively active in science, art, and morality, yet one or more is generally predominant—in one case the will, in another the intellect and judgment, in a third the imagination and emotions. In religion, on the other hand, as we have already observed, none of these functions can have the mastery, as otherwise religion would degenerate into intellectualism, fanaticism, mys-

ticism, moralism, or some other craze. In religion all one's faculties must work together in harmony, none being entitled to precedence. The old sayings that "religion embraces the whole man," and that "religion occupies the central place in man's spirit," are not perhaps strictly accurate, and at all events the important conclusions they involve have not been drawn from them; but they bear witness to the fact that men have long been convinced of the many-sided character of religion. The proposition that religion is the essential in man has been admirably maintained by the distinguished Dutch poet-theologian, Abraham des Amorie van der Hoeven, jun. It is certain, at all events, that religion, along with all that is truly great in man's aims and actions, emanates directly from the distinctive badge of his humanity—the Infinite within him.

All the mental and moral faculties are thus different and yet akin—akin to one another and akin to religion also. How far is this the case? Are they akin solely because they are all manifestations of one and the same spirit, or is their relationship still closer? May not science, art, and morality possibly have sprung from religion; may they not be cuttings from the same parent stem, which have grown up as independent trees? This proposition has lately been emphatically affirmed.[1] Religion, say the advocates of this theory,

[1] Morris Jastrow, jun., The Modern Attitude towards Religion: Ethical Addresses, ser. iv., No. 8: Philadelphia, 1897.

is the mother of all civilisation, having alone given it the first impulse. It was religion that educated man to be a moral being, having first awakened his moral sense. Religion alone, having taught him obedience to the powers above him, likewise taught him to use self-control, and to sacrifice self and selfish aims, for the purpose of attaining objects of higher value. It was religion that gave him an ideal and ceaseless aim beyond his mere struggle for existence. It was religion, too, that gave birth to art and letters. The earliest works of art are attempts, on the part of half-civilised man, to give a dignified form to the creations of his religious imagination, and to provide splendid and permanent dwellings for the beings whom he worships. While he himself lives in a poor hut, the temples he erects in honour of his gods bear striking testimony to his ability and perseverance, and they are enriched with the most beautiful decoration that his barbaric taste can suggest. The earliest literature is purely religious, and later literature too. The whole of the literature of antiquity, from the Egyptian, Babylonian, Indian, and Persian down to the Greek, and a large proportion of the Roman, is, as it were, saturated with religion. And the same remark applies to the Middle Ages. The poetry and the history usually termed profane are of comparatively late origin, and even in them the influence of religion is still traceable. And may not science too, in all its branches, be fairly described as the offspring of reli-

gion? Priests, or religious men at least, were the first teachers of mankind, and they were the first to administer justice in the name of the gods. All the earliest princes had a sacerdotal character, and, as we still say of our modern monarchs, they ruled by the grace of God. The gods themselves, according to the unanimous belief of the ancients, were the first lawgivers. Astrology has given birth to astronomy, sorcery and witchcraft to medicine and natural history, and religious contemplation to all philosophy. The oldest philosophy of the Indians, as embodied in the Upanishads, is rooted in the sacred Veda, and is even called Vedānta, or the end of Veda. And what is the philosophy of the Greeks, as represented in its first rudiments by the Ionian school, but mythology translated into abstract ideas? On all sides, in short, we find abundant evidence in support of the theory that art, science, and philosophy, law, ethics, and politics, though now separate and independent departments, were all originally offshoots of religion.

Such is the theory. I cannot, however, see my way to indorse it, except perhaps to a limited extent. In the first place, to begin with the last of the arguments stated, mythology was not originally and properly a religious doctrine, any more than the animism with which it is so closely connected; it was simply a crude form of philosophy, an explanation of those phenomena which struck man's dawning apprehensions as requiring

to be accounted for. Religious doctrine doubtless borrowed much of its material from mythology, and blended it with its own purely religious speculations; but it certainly cannot be called the source of mythology. It is true that the priesthood, or rather certain religious castes, gradually monopolised scriptural learning, literature, art, every branch of knowledge, and even the public administration of justice, and usurped an overweening authority both in and over the state. But this occurred only after long struggles for the mastery. Sacerdotal castes are not to be found in the infancy of history. We know their origin, and we can trace their growth.

Let us next test the theory in the case of architecture. Although it is not absolutely certain, I believe that further investigation will establish the fact, that the oldest buildings known to history were castles or strongholds, which indeed often contained a chamber dedicated to the deity, but which were assuredly not temples. It is certain, at any rate, that in India, in Hellas, and in Italy the temple proper is of comparatively late origin, making its appearance long after other important buildings had been erected. From the Bible we learn that David possessed his castle and his cedar palace, while Yahve still dwelt in the tabernacle. The tombs of the kings and magnates of Egypt are older than any of the temples we know, although, according to some vague traditions, there are temples

which trace their origin to the remotest antiquity. It is specially noteworthy that the oldest sculptures of Egypt, and perhaps those of Babylonia also, are far superior, both in point of artistic ability and in freedom and truth of conception, to the works produced by later ages in those countries, as the artists were then tied down by priestly tradition to certain rigid conventional forms in their delineation of the human figure. Again, in the case of literature, it is a mistake to say that the oldest literature is exclusively religious, in the sense that its object was solely to extol the gods or to minister to their ritual. I will not insist on the fact that the maxims of Ptahhotep (the Prisse Papyrus), which is reputed the oldest book in the world, is a collection of moral sentiments, somewhat in the style of the Book of Ecclesiastes in the Old Testament; for it was preceded by other writings in the shape of inscriptions engraved in stone, such as the Pyramid texts, which, being destined to equip the deceased for his struggles in the lower world, naturally partook of a magical, mythical, or semi-religious character. But beside these texts there are others, equally old, which are non-religious, such as the biographical inscriptions in the tomb of Una, of the sixth Dynasty. Nor do I insist on the fact that the earliest Assyrian texts we are acquainted with, while not omitting to do homage to the gods, always gave precedence to the great military exploits of the kings, after which they narrate

how these monarchs built or restored the sanctuaries of their gods; for the Assyrian civilisation is either an offshoot of the Babylonian, or a graft upon it, while the origins of the latter, far back as its records extend, are still undiscovered. And after all, when we desire to trace the course of the earliest civilisation, we are hardly justified in appealing to the oldest civilised states, such as Babylon, Egypt, and China; for, when these appeared on the scene, they had already reached a high state of culture, which implied long ages of previous development. Nor will India serve our purpose, for the Ṛgveda itself, as a collection and a sacred text, is relatively modern, and moreover contains several purely secular hymns. But let us rather turn our attention to nations which we have seen emerging from barbarism and gradually ascending in the scale of civilisation. In the case of Hellas, for example, the earliest great work handed down to us is an epic poem, which preceded the Homeric hymns and the Theogony of Hesiod. Again, in the case of Israel, the triumph-song of Deborah and David's lament over Saul and Jonathan are among the oldest specimens of Hebrew poetry, while the references contained in the sacerdotal and prophetic Scriptures show that they must have been preceded by purely secular histories. From such instances as these it is abundantly clear that, from the remotest antiquity, there has existed a purely secular literature, parallel with the purely religious, but quite

distinct from it, while there is absolutely no evidence to show that the religious is the older of the two.

Nor is there any better evidence to support the theory, however attractive it may seem, that religion is the mother of all civilisation. Philosophy and science, poetry and art, ethics and law, all flow from man's spiritual life, but from distinct sources, to which they must be traced by other sciences than ours. Yet the theory, which, in its general application, I have felt bound to oppose, contains a great truth. For it shows, at least, that religion responds to the most widely prevalent and predominant need of the human soul; it shows that religion, though not the mother of civilisation, exerts the profoundest and mightiest influence over it, while in turn it gains sustenance from civilisation, borrowing from it, and assimilating, whatever may conduce to its own growth. Religion is so intimately bound up with man's personality that it wields a kind of central authority over all the other activities of his spiritual life. It is, in fact, the great motive power of all higher development and progress. If it slumbers, or is altogether dead, poor man drifts about like a helpless log on the ocean of life. If a man thirsts for knowledge, and especially if he is earnestly in search of truth, religion impels him to dig deeper or to climb higher; it inspires the poet and the artist to make the best use of their powers, and to cultivate their noblest gifts; it will not suffer us to rest complacently

content with the observance of social or churchly morality, but constantly holds up before our eyes the loftier aim, "Be ye perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect!" Everything finite it places in the light of the Infinite. All the great epochs in human history have been the outcome of some religious reform. Nothing can be more absurd, or rather nothing sadder, than an attempt to ignore religion in the writing of history. Whether we love or hate it, prize or despise it, we must needs reckon with it. If, as Mr Morris Jastrow has finely said, you turn your back upon religion, you will see it facing you from the opposite direction. And if you try to shut your eyes to it, you will get no peace, because it dwells within you.

But perhaps wise people will shake their heads, and ask, with a superior smile, whether all this is ideal or reality, fact or fiction. Actual history, they will perhaps say, gives a very different account of the matter. Religion the mainspring of progress and culture! Surely the reverse is the case. On one side we see religion at deadly enmity with science and philosophy, or at least dictating to them the result of their researches, and coercing its adherents into obedience, or persecuting them to the death, if they presume to rebel against the tyranny of dogmas. Is it not the irreconcilable enemy of free, impartial, and unprejudiced research, whose wings it always tries to clip? And it is not only owing to special causes in the case of Chris-

tianity during the last four centuries, as has sometimes been maintained, but in all ages, from West to far East, that religion has been hostile to the boldest thinkers and investigators. In another direction we see religion bridling poetry and art, imposing laws upon them which they dare not transgress, hampering them in their free development, and even denouncing them as temptations of the Devil. On moral life, in particular, it has had a baneful influence. While true morality incites us to seek and embrace the good for its own sake, and because we love it, and to reject the evil because we abhor it, religion comes with its promises of reward and threats of punishment, and thus taints pure morality with selfish motives. Nay, have there not even been persons who have seriously, as far at least as their limited observation would permit, tried to collect statistics regarding religious and moral life, in order to prove that the further religion progresses in power and influence, the more morality declines? Paris, the modern Babylon, as it has been called—though I am not sure that either Paris or Babylon would suffer much from a comparison with other capitals, great or small—Paris, we are told, is plunging ever more deeply into a sink of iniquity, and yet Paris is daily becoming more pious! At all events it is a well-known fact that religion often serves as a cloak for all kinds of sins and misdeeds.

While I admit most of these facts, I demur to the

manner in which they are grouped, and to the conclusions drawn from them. Assuming it to be the case that morality declines as the influence of religion increases, and that the converse is also true, this would prove nothing to the detriment of religion unless it could be proved that it was the same individuals who became at once less moral and more pious, or more moral and less pious, whereas the individuals are certainly different. If there is any real connection between the two phenomena, it may possibly be the case that an increasing number of persons are prompted to seek strength and comfort in religious observances, partly as a protest against increasing immorality, and partly from real penitence and contrition. But it is obviously only possible to compare persons who are outwardly religious with those whose outward conduct is bad; it is obviously impossible to reduce true piety and morality to the form of a table of statistics.

The view that religion promotes and hallows all civilisation seems irreconcilable with the view that it is hostile to free development in every sphere. But this is not really the case. There is no real antagonism, because the disputants are at cross purposes. For here, as so often happens, there is a confusion, or rather a double confusion, of terms. The terms religion and civilisation are both used by the disputants in different senses. One man means religion in general, as a frame of mind, an emotion, and at the same time as the in-

spiration of a higher spirit; his opponent speaks of *a* religion, meaning one of those transient forms of religious life which, having served its time and fallen into decay, cannot tolerate those revelations of progress in the spiritual domain which mark the awakening of a new life. One man is speaking of true science, which confines itself to its own sphere; his opponent refers to that arrogant and presumptuous though very superficial science which, arguing from a few isolated data, would deny the existence of one of the elements, probably the most important element, in human nature. One man is referring to that art which seeks nothing but what is noble and beautiful; another is thinking of that depraved art which ministers to base and sordid objects, and is worse than brutal. In this matter, therefore, we must refrain from premature generalisations. If religious persons, or those who are called upon to act as representatives of religious life, oppose a science or philosophy which denies to religion any right of existence, they are perfectly justified in doing so; for such science or philosophy exceeds its authority, and usurps a right of judgment which does not belong to it. If they find that art or poetry, instead of ennobling mankind, has a degrading and depraving influence, they rightly denounce it, not from narrow-mindedness, but because it is in their sacred duty. They will not, on the other hand, oppose or persecute those who open up new paths, the greatest thinkers, and the most gifted

artists and poets; nor will they, for the sake of maintaining some narrow old view of life, seek to prevent ethical science from developing freely in accordance with its own principles. All this they leave to be done by the representatives of some form of religion which has outlived its time, whose doctrine represents the views of life and the world held at the time of its foundation, and which has thus fallen far below the level of the science and philosophy, the knowledge of the world, and the civilisation of a later age. Fancying that, with their doctrine, religion itself must stand or fall, the champions of an effete system stoutly oppose all dangerous innovations. They act in good faith, but they are wrong. Religion is not threatened. Although certain religious views may conflict with scientific facts, religion itself is not endangered by any legitimate result of scientific research, by any utterance of true art, or by any philosophical or ethical system thoughtfully based on sound principles. On the contrary, all this promotes the growth of religion, compelling it to remould antiquated forms, which injure it by clinging to old errors, and to bring them into harmony with the needs of the age.

I do not, therefore, in the least apprehend that the conflict between the different spheres of spiritual life, and particularly between civilisation and the various religions, will either lead to the entire subjection of all intellect and talent, of all research and thought, to the

dictates of any sacerdotal caste or theological school, or else end in the complete extinction of religion. It will rather lead to a fuller development of religious life, to a nobler revelation of the religious spirit. During the last fifty or sixty years, a theory which the boldest free-thinker once scarcely dared to utter has been pretty loudly proclaimed in various quarters—the theory that mankind may henceforth live quite happily, nay, more happily than ever, without religion. Art, according to some, would offer what was formerly expected of religion. But this view has found few adherents, because the worship of the beautiful is necessarily possible for a few privileged persons only, and is beyond the reach of the poor, careworn, toiling millions, struggling for bare existence. According to a much commoner theory, science might take the place of religion. Science, the great liberator of the human mind, was thought to be capable of ensuring the welfare and happiness of mankind. Diffused among all classes of society, it would deliver the lowly and ignorant from oppression, it would solve the social question, and cure all social evils! Surely this was a delusion, though its object was a generous one. And am I not right in saying that the fond expectations of those who were led away by this theory have been grievously disappointed by its results? Science has indeed worked marvels during the present century in every department, and has thus yielded a rich harvest for our social life and earned our gratitude.

We who love it, and devote our lives to it, can but rejoice that its light shines around us more brightly than at any previous period in the world's history. That light is essential to our very lives; but light is not the only essential—we also require warmth for our souls, and science has no warmth to offer. Nor can a strictly moral life provide us with that warmth. I quite admit that our age has progressed in general morality. I am not one of those *laudatores temporis acti* who extol the virtues of their forefathers and deplore the moral degeneracy of their contemporaries. History teaches otherwise. Our manners have been softened, and our moral insight refined. Nor is any religion possible nowadays unless united with the purest ethics. But, conversely, without the inspiring breath of religion, ethics must languish and sink to the level of a mere commonplace, social morality. Among other things, our science has demonstrated by historical and psychological research that the religious need is a general human need. And the more we study religion, the further we penetrate into its history, the better we understand the nature of its doctrines, so much the more clearly we shall see that it is entitled to precedence in our spiritual life, because the religious need is the mightiest, profoundest, and most overmastering of all. Let no dread of ecclesiastical ambition and sacerdotal tyranny prevent us from recognising this; for they are powerless except when true religion languishes or slumbers. Once awaken re-

ligion to full life and activity, and their influence is gone. Will it now reawake?

Our brilliant nineteenth century has achieved wonders, but it has been disappointed in its expectation of such a reawakening. The waning century seems weary and almost despairing. It sometimes speaks of the bankruptcy of science and the illusions of philosophy. There are even persons who, in their despair, are willing to be fettered anew with the shackles from which the courage and perseverance, the toil and strife, of saints and heroes have freed them. Others, however, are reluctant to throw away a single precious conquest of the century, or to give up the smallest fragment of their dearly bought liberty; and they therefore decline to surrender to those who would at once deprive them of all these blessings. And others, again, are convinced by their study of religious life, and of the laws which govern it, that the substance of these conquests and the maintenance of that liberty can only be guaranteed provided they lead to a new manifestation of religious life. Our science cannot call forth such a manifestation, but it may pave the way for it by tracing the evolution of religion, explaining its essentials, and showing where its origin is to be sought for. Let it do its own duty in throwing light upon the part that religion has ever played in the history of mankind, and still plays in every human soul. And then, without preaching, or

special pleading, or apologetic argument, but solely by means of the actual facts it reveals, our beloved science will help to bring home to the restless spirits of our time the truth that there is no rest for them unless "they arise and go to their Father."

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